



# Fifth estate

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"Nuke Bird" — Richard Mock



## LIFE DURING WAR TIME:

Peter Lamborn Wilson, *My Summer Vacation in Afghanistan*;  
Alien(h)ated; A Fifth Estate staffer in Palestine;  
Emma Goldman's *New Declaration of Independence*;  
plus fighting neighborhood nukes, more on the Failure of the  
Left in Kosovo, Marcos of Mexico



# Fifth Estate

The magazine you hold in your hands represents the ongoing project of a dedicated group of individuals and the enduring vision of many more. Just a few months ago, it looked as though this anti-authoritarian publishing cooperative might retire after 37 years of, in the FBI's assessment, "supporting the cause of revolution everywhere." However, while the writers and activists in the Detroit collective have been unable to put out the paper on a regular schedule, their wish to see it continue led to passing the torch to a new editorial enclave based on the radical communes of rural Tennessee.

The hills and hollows of the mid-South—with their rustic yet lush, cooperative land experiments—are a long way geographically and culturally from the streets of Detroit's Cass Corridor and the gritty basement offices that the *Fifth Estate* has called home since the 1960s. However, the same desires motivating the Detroit group to resist the megamachine in "the belly of the beast" for nearly four decades also inspire the humble yet festive version of anarchist utopianism practiced at Pumpkin Hollow, Short Mountain, Moonshadow, and IDA—the places from which the new editorial group draws its members. As we further the *Fifth Estate* legacy, we pledge to maintain the publication's implacable opposition to authoritarian institutions and integrity as a volunteer-staffed and vigorously critical endeavor.

My first intimate contact with the *Fifth Estate* came at a pivotal time. It was early 1988, and I was twenty years old; I had just dropped out of college and moved to Detroit's notoriously bohemian yet significantly dilapidated Cass Corridor. My then partner brought me to a basement office where an inspired crew of radicals as old as my parents were publishing an anti-authoritarian newspaper and planning protests against the giant trash incinerator the city was planning.

At the time, I knew little of this milieu's history, but the energy of the place immediately attracted me. From my elder comrades, I developed habits of critical reading, principled writing, and fierce debating that I could not find in the university. From that time until I left Detroit in late 1994, my active involvement in the *Fifth Estate* collective fused with organizing numerous protests against the incinerator, the Gulf War, the auto industry, the city's wealthy elite, and the general misery of modern life under capitalism.

During the same period, we started the 404 Willis and Trumbullplex collectives to provide venues for cultural activism,

collective housing, and Food Not Bombs-style mutual aid for the neighborhood. Deciding to start a "permanent autonomous zone" in the backwoods of Tennessee, I had to learn to do activism in a dramatically different regional scene. But the experiences of my Detroit days and the influence of the *Fifth Estate's* Detroit group on my writing, thinking, and politics remain.

As grim as the reality of the contemporary world appears, we all agree that the encroaching police state and illusion of unity in America—along with other sources of dismay such as the widening global gap between rich and poor—require us to intensify the project of radical resistance. The essential questions of how to live without war, corporations, prisons, police, and pollution compel us to action. The need for authentic freedom and cooperation between individuals and collectives who respect each other and the earth is as immediate as ever.

Some people expected the twenty-first century to look different from the twentieth. Activists who have devoted their lives to creative subversion and "speaking truth to power" must cultivate some hope in the face of unimaginable atrocity. Yet, the new millennium has not ushered in a New Age; instead, the political and social reality is more of a New Rage, fueled by old-time divisions of ethnicity, religion, and class.

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## **We pledge to maintain the FE's implacable opposition to authoritarian institutions and integrity as a volunteer-staffed and vigorously critical endeavor**

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The movements for an autonomous, compassionate culture have been unsuccessful at shifting social relations away from coercive power. Both the state and capital remain resilient. Neither violence nor nonviolence, neither agitation nor legislation, neither hope nor hype—none of this has unleashed universal noncooperation so far. While we cherish a few small victories for global justice in the streets, our movements have not significantly altered the fate for our brothers and sisters in the prisons and sweatshops or changed the future for our mountains and streams. Still, I'm encouraged by revolutionaries who venture down the future's unpaved roads, armed only with an acute sense of "now or never."

When you read this number 357 of the *Fifth Estate*, you may notice our new magazine format, a renewed commitment to maintaining our quarterly schedule, and the appearance of some new voices within our pages. More than this, we hope you see that the spirit that made this project both noteworthy and notorious in the past has not diminished. We want you to join us in maintaining a sustainable defiance and fervent opposition to the pernicious grip that the powerful hold on our planet's future at the same time we nurture desires for a radically different world.

—Sunfrog, Pumpkin Hollow, May 2002

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## Don't Mourn—Organize!

### Hundreds “Fiddle Down the FBI” on “Judi Bari Day” in Oakland

Note: As we go to press, the jury in the “Judi Bari vs. the FBI” case is still deliberating. During the rally discussed below, the lawyers for the defendants filed a motion to dismiss the case because the protest might unfairly influence jurors against the FBI. The judge, however, rejected this motion. By the time you read this, the case has probably been decided. Visit [judibari.org](http://judibari.org) for the latest. Photo by unrLEE.

By Dan Brook (from [www.zmag.org](http://www.zmag.org))

Judi loved to howl, so we howled for her, howled for fun, and howled for justice. May 24 marked exactly twelve years since a bomb ripped through Judi Bari and the car that she and Darryl Cherney were in. The motion-activated pipe—conveniently placed right under her driver's seat—was intended to kill. Although lucky to survive, Judi lived with a limp and chronic pain until she died of breast cancer in March 1997.

May 24 also marked the sixth day of deliberations, after seven weeks of trial, for the jury before it returns its verdict in an historic trial against the FBI (and the Oakland Police Department)—for falsely arresting Judi and Darryl and violating their civil rights, for failing to go after the bomber(s), for obstructing justice and



covering up their own illegal misconduct, for framing the victims as the perpetrators, and engaging in a new COINTELPRO against these peaceful eco-activists.

Judi was a union organizer, a feminist, an environmental activist, and a mother. She always took the time to make connections between work, welfare, war, and waste, to mention a few, recognizing the humanity of her fellow humans and the wildness of the wilderness, while injecting these often thorny issues with joy and humor. The bombing in 1990 slowed her down, but it never stopped her.

Like Joe Hill who urged before his own death, “Don’t mourn, organize,” and Mother Jones who counseled, “Pray for the dead

(continued on page 13)

## Tennessee Radicals Resist the Permanent Nuclear War Machine at Oak Ridge



Protesters block access to the Y-12 nuclear facility in Oak Ridge, TN.

Photo from [stopthebombs.org](http://stopthebombs.org)

By MaxZine Weinstein and Sunfrog

A few months ago, George W. Bush proclaimed that 2002 would be a “war year.” Indeed, the so-called “War Against Terrorism” promises war without end. Still, the President has not hesitated in making superficial gestures towards “peace.” The latest of these is the recent nuclear arms reduction treaty signed with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The treaty will not dismantle a single weapon, simply move some into storage.

“Instead of liquidating the nuclear legacy President Bush is, at best, only rearranging it,”

(continued on page 5)



## on the covers

### Richard Mock (front)

I contribute my social commentary linocut images to the FE to add weight to the humanist argument against fear and power mongers taking over the world. The activities of large collective organizations like corporations and governments create a constant barrage of false information and phantoms to justify their controlling structures and systematic programmed removal of the earth's natural resources that in truth are the outer body of all of us who are on this planet.

My graphic art brings that individual focus with the emotions and intuitions we all possess to play against the floating phantoms represented in today's commercial media. I have been doing social commentary for newspapers since 1978. Amazingly, I have had the work appear in institutional rags such as the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* and United Nations publications, *Populi* and *Development Forum*. I have always been lucky to find people with humanity in their make up as the art directors of those publications at the time. With a little agreement NOTES do get passed through the bars of established institutions by individual actions. At present I send out my social commentary linocut images to about 55 newspapers internationally through The Cartoonists and Writers Syndicate.

—Richard Mock Brooklyn, New York

### Albo Jeavons (back)

Philadelphia-based, art school dropout, **Albo Jeavons**, is a long-time pleasure-activist working with grassroots anarchist, queer, and AIDS groups. Also a volunteer at the resilient Wooden Shoe bookstore, his work has appeared on t-shirts, posters, stickers, lamp-posts, toilet stalls, and the Internet, and in magazines, books, VCRs, zines, film festivals, and even, occasionally, in art galleries.

We hope to feature more of his "subvertisements" in the future; on his website ([www.adanon.org](http://www.adanon.org)), he writes:

"[A]s people not directly involved in the production and dissemination of spectacular culture, we are ready to confront the damage that has been done to our loved ones and to ourselves. As 'consumers' we have hit bottom. We are ready to be actual people again, and to confront the stunting of our creativity, the twisting of our psyches, the indoctrination, the belittling, and the dumbing-down.

"Our first principle is that there is no we without you. We have no employees, no members, no headquarters, and we are profoundly allergic to leaders and hierarchy. If you agree with our basic message, and you want to participate, then you are already one of us."

## HARDLINES

The Plains Art Museum (in Fargo, ND) has produced a book called **HARDLINES**. The



book is the result of classes taught by Richard Mock of New York. **HARDLINES** features social commentary linocut prints from each of the participants ages ten through adult who worked with Richard Mock. The themes presented in each artwork represent social commentary about present day issues, personal points of view, experiences, or memories.

The book costs \$15. For more information, call the Plains Art Museum at 701/232-3821 or visit [plainsart.org](http://plainsart.org)

## fifth estate

The Fifth Estate (FE) is a cooperative, nonprofit project, publishing since 1965. As opposed to professionals who publish to secure wages or invest in the information industry, our collective consists of volunteer writers, artists, and editors—friends who produce the paper as an expression of resistance to an unjust and destructive society.

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## Protesting the Permanent War Machine

(continued from page 3)

explains Kevin Martin, executive director of Peace Action. "His treaty doesn't require any weapons to be destroyed, merely set aside in storage where they will be vulnerable to theft or rogue use. Past performance and the Bush administration's penchant for unilateralism indicates that the majority of the weapons eliminations promised under the treaty will never come to pass."

Perhaps some North Americans have been lulled by the myth that there is no longer a nuclear threat. In fact, the danger has grown as the government talks more and more about developing and using a new generation of nuclear weapons to accomplish foreign policy objectives. Under the Bush administration, the nukes industry is getting new contracts and programs.

Among the revelations fueling the war machine is the disclosure that Bush considers plausible the use of nuclear first-strikes against whomever he designates a "rogue nation." Of course, most readers of this publication realize that the United States is itself the world's most dangerous "rogue state." Bush bullies, "We've got all options on the table, because we want to make it very clear to nations that you will not threaten the United States or use weapons of mass destruction against us or our allies."

Even the response of mainstream critics has been appropriately suspicious. "They're trying desperately to find new uses for nuclear weapons, when their uses should be limited to deterrence," adds John Isaacs of the Council for a Livable World. "This is very, very dangerous talk ... Dr. Strangelove is clearly still alive in the Pentagon," emphasizes Paul Richter in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Since the Cold War officially ended, the anti-nuclear movement appeared to have vanished. Many radical anti-nuke activists—such as Starhawk, David Solnit, and Katya Komisaruk—who stoked the sometimes tepid peace movement with creativity and risk in the 1980s, have turned their organizing efforts to the global justice movement, bringing with them the dramatically democratic affinity group structures that have been so effective at mass mobilizations against the corporate elite. We need that kind of bold, risky energy in the anti-nuclear movement once again.

Here in the South, we've participated in biannual pilgrimages to Oak Ridge, Tennessee to the Y-12 nuclear weapons plant. The bombs used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were built here, just as the next generation of "mini-nukes" will be assembled in our back yard. The Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance (OREPA) organizes weekly vigils and larger protests. Rallies, speakers, music, civil disobedience and literature tables are the fare of the day. On one hand, we feel like we have been doing this same dance for years. But on the other, it is not the same dance—the content and character of the protests is changing.

Our local A-bomb plant fits neatly into the Bush plans. Y-12 is the last full scale nuclear weapons production facility in the

United States. The Department of Energy has unveiled plans for a new "National Security Complex" in Oak Ridge. A brand new 4 billion dollar bomb plant would enable them to do 10 times as much weapons work as current levels and to go into production of new nuclear weapons. The forces pushing to expand this work are formidable: corporate profiteers have lobbied and bought politicians with millions of dollars of investments to continue these projects.

The OREPA protests have a standard script. We gather on a Sunday at a city park next door to a museum documenting the great role of the atom (this is what Oak Ridge built its fortune on, starting as a World War II secret city to construct the first atomic bomb). We march through the streets by malls and fast food joints and the American flags that predominate exterior decorations these days. We arrive at the gates of Y-12 on the outskirts of the city. We are treated to (or bored by, depending upon your point of view) music, speeches, theater, and free food from Food Not Bombs. A group of people "cross the line" in acts of civil disobedience. Some years there have been 200 to 300 protesters. At the recent April actions, those numbers doubled.

In some ways this sounds like a rehashed plot from the 1980s and '90s. However, we are encouraged by the energy, the more complete critique, the understanding of corporate globalization, and the connection to other social issues that are present at these events. Queer activists are happy to notice that homophobia (itself a driving force in militarism) is no longer a big part of the peace movement, as it was just 10 years ago. There is much less of "single issue" mentality. These shifts bode well for creating a long-term community of resistance.

Protests to stop the extended war against everything are growing. What remains to be seen is whether or not a long-term, effective strategy can develop to stop the nuclear madness. We must move beyond the amount of energy that gets put into the "let's see how many people we can get arrested at a protest" game. While massive civil disobedience actions may help build a movement, they are not enough.

In the late 1980s, anarchists in the anti-nuke movement encouraged creativity and new tactics just as we've done in the streets to oppose organizations like the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO, and so on. Clearly, it's time to renew a more vigorous opposition to America's own "weapons of mass destruction" and ingest the beleaguered anti-nuke movement with the energy of the global justice movement.

### Hiroshima Day Actions for Peace

In Oak Ridge, Tennessee

August 3 and 4, 2002

for information, contact OREPA

PO Box 5743, Oak Ridge, TN 37831

865-483-8202 stopthebombs.org



by Sheila Nopper

# Alien(h)ated

In this country, I am called a "permanent resident alien" or, more to the point, a "non-citizen." What that means in the patriotic war frenzy that has taken hold of the minds of the American populace following the tragedy of 9/11, is that the few legal rights I was entitled to as an immigrant prior to that day of reckoning have now been effectively eliminated, and my human rights are increasingly under assault.

Less than six weeks after 9/11, with virtually no hearing or public debate, and in spite of persistent objections from numerous human rights organizations—George Bush smugly signed into law the massive 342 page USA PATRIOT Act (United and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism). The Act creates the new federal crime of "domestic terrorism," which includes "acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of criminal laws" if they "appear to be intended... to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion," and if they "occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States." Consequently, any action associated with civil disobedience, minor property damage, participating in a non-violent peace demonstration in opposition to Dubya's ongoing "war on terrorism," or, perhaps even contributing to a publication such as *The Fifth Estate*, could conceivably be construed as a terrorist act.

For anarchists who are forced to contend with the myriad repressive authoritarian boundaries imposed upon us by the nation state and its increasingly militaristic police forces, the experience of being alien(h)ated is all too familiar. Yet, while the new legislation implicates citizens and non-citizens alike in its complex web of expanded and ambiguously defined terminology, the repercussions for non-citizens are more severe. If the surveillance squads of the Bush administration arbitrarily label me a terrorist outlaw, they could deport me and/or place me in mandatory detention for up to six months before a review is required. During this time, I would have no right to be informed of the evidence against me, to contest the classification, or to receive free counsel for any legal proceedings. Moreover, the burden of proof would now be placed on me as the defendant.

To aid and abet Bush's terrorist hunters in trapping their victims—citizens and non-citizens alike—the USA PATRIOT Act

provides a multitude of new and loosely defined crimes for which to prosecute someone and an expanded array of surveillance tools with which to determine such crimes are being committed. With negligible, if any, checks and balances incorporated into the legislation that would help to prevent the potential abuse of these privileges, law enforcement officials have gained enhanced authorization to: monitor email and Internet use; access financial, educational, and medical records; conduct surreptitious wiretaps; and search a person's home and/or office without his or her prior knowledge.

Furthermore, subsequent testimony by Attorney General John Ashcroft (12/6/01) unequivocally equated political dissidents with terrorists. Urging us to engage in Orwellian "double-think," he stated, "To those who scare peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberty, my message is this: your tactics only aid terrorists, for they erode our national unity and diminish our resolve." Adding insult to injury, every one of us is now expected to spy on our friends and acquaintances because we could be charged with the crime of failing to notify the FBI if they determine that we had "reasonable grounds to believe" that someone was about to commit a "terrorist offense." As Bush later asserted so simplistically in his January 24 speech, "If you hide a terrorist,

or you feed a terrorist, or you coddle a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorists, and we will hold you accountable." These statements reinforce what an unidentified police officer previously had declared in a surprisingly candid response following the 9/11 collapse of the World Trade Center in relation to the heightened securi-

ty measures being enforced in New York City: "This is how it is because this is how it has to be... This is a police state now." (*New York Post*, 9/27/01)

Until recently, the government's various (in)security forces have focused their domestic terrorist investigations on immigrants of Middle Eastern descent. Of the approximately 1,200 Muslim men who have been arrested since 9/11, hundreds have since been deported and/or released while more than 300 remain in detention and access to information regarding their cases is cautiously guarded. But the "war on terrorism" at home has only just begun.

In a landmark case which challenges the Sixth Amendment guarantee of lawyer-client confidentiality, New York defense attorney (and American citizen) Lynne Stewart was indicted in April because she allegedly "facilitated and concealed communications between Sheikh Abdel Rahman and Islamic Group leaders around the world." Conversations between Stewart and her client had been monitored, and her office files and computer were subsequently confiscated, which has had a chilling effect on lawyers,

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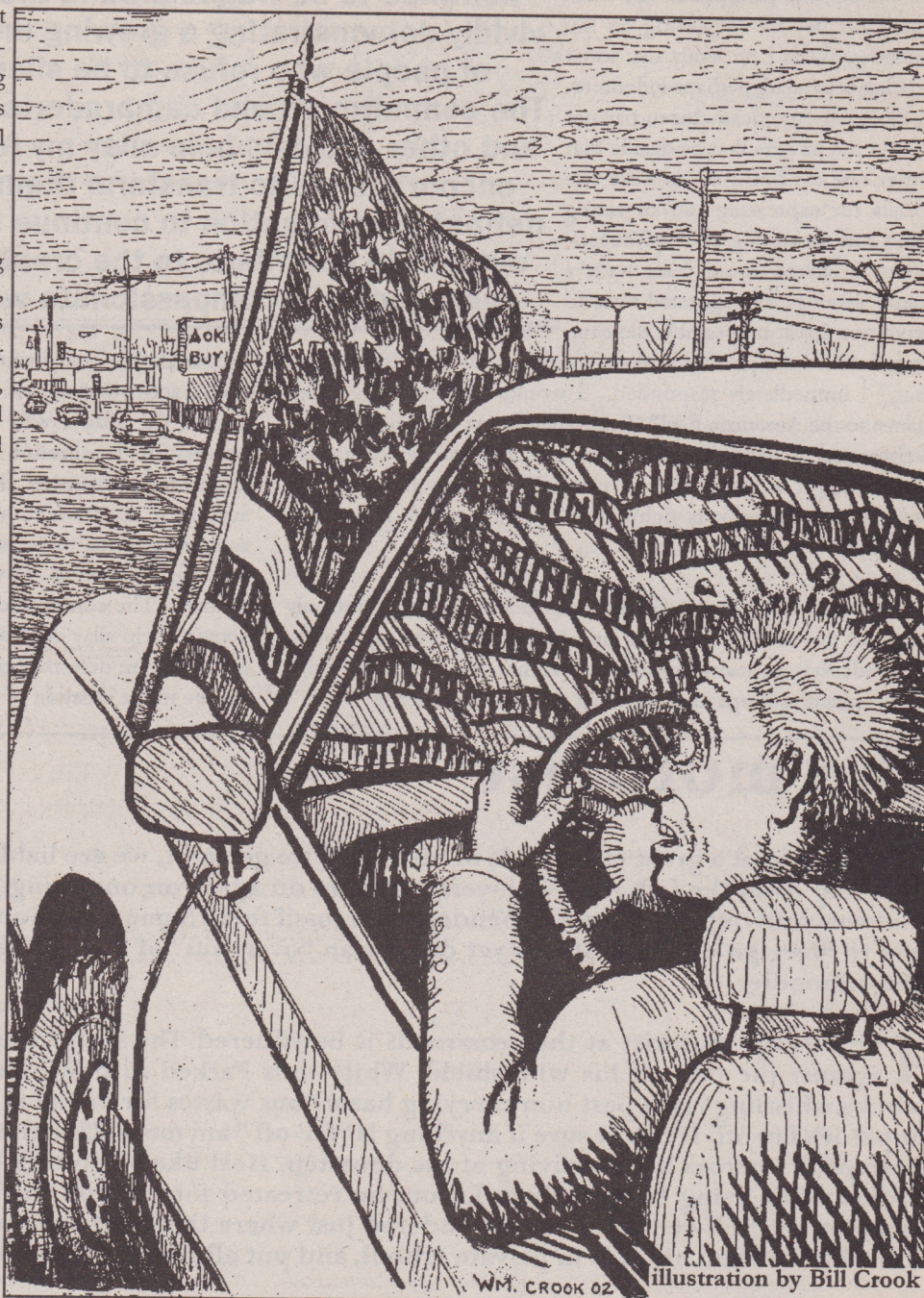


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## the Orwellian Patriot Act and the postmodern panopticon

particularly those who have in the past been willing to represent politically controversial clients. If this war of enduring intervention is allowed to continue, it is only a matter of time before political activists begin to be swept up in its fascist dragnet.

Today, we are faced with the all-seeing eye of a pervasive surveillance network, which has infiltrated many of society's institutions as well as, increasingly, our public spaces such as city streets, parks, and roadway intersections. As Michel Foucault pointed out in his seminal work, *Discipline & Punish* (1979), its origins go back to the "panopticon," an idea formulated by Jeremy Bentham, an 18th century British utilitarian philosopher and "prison reformer." Bentham's intent was to design a prison that would eliminate the need for physical torture by constructing a circular facility in which the cells of the prisoners surround a tall central tower from which the inspector sitting inside can, at any time of day or night, observe the prisoners. It was imperative, Bentham stressed (*The Panopticon Writings*, 1995), that "the persons to be inspected should always feel themselves as if under inspection," even when, in fact, they were not. Aware that the inspector can "see without being seen," the prisoners internalize the inspector's monitoring gaze thus becoming their own inspector. Bentham's idea was for the threat of surveillance itself to act as a form of disciplinary self-control by the inmate over his/her own behavior.



People have always grappled with the fear of being ostracized by their family, friends and community, or being incarcerated and/or tortured if they were to openly express their opposition to the ever-increasing state-sanctioned repression at home and abroad. I've heard some people in the middle-sized Midwestern city in which I currently live say they're afraid of being persecuted for simply writing a letter to the editor of their local newspaper, or for participating in a peace vigil, let alone a direct action protest against the current war.

Bush's threatening black-and-white assertion that "You're either

with us or against us" intentionally intensifies the intimidation that individuals—and even governments—experience. Given the overwhelmingly superior destructive potential of US military forces, the world ultimately is forced to submit, however cynically, to the terrorism of America's imperialist agenda.

As a Canadian of European descent, for two decades I have, without hesitation, freely spoken out as a writer/activist against neocolonialism, racism, sexism, war, and other injustices. Now

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living in the US, in the current political climate, the panopticon has infiltrated my psyche by playing on my anxieties. What I presently fear most is being separated, perhaps indefinitely, from my American citizen partner should the powers that be decide that either one (or both) of us were terrorists for expressing and/or acting upon our dissenting political beliefs. When I shared these fears with a friend recently, he suggested that, to avoid the threat of possible deportation, I could simply become an American citizen. "But to do that," I immediately responded, "I would have to pledge allegiance to the American flag!" Clearly, that is not an option for me. Neither is self-censorship. What kind of Orwellian democracy are we living in if we are willing to surrender the very freedoms the government claims it is fighting to defend for the illusion of security?

As George Orwell feared, the totalitarian state seeks to not only force us to betray our ideals and each other but, ultimately, demands that we learn to love Big Brother. Yet, while the Bush Administration wraps itself in a flag and paternalistically

**Massive actions of resistance to neoliberal corporate globalization organizations continue to be waged around the world, vividly demonstrating a growing movement of people who refuse to be silenced. The commitment and camaraderie of these and other activists help allay my fears and encourage me to transform them into a defiant determination to continue to speak out and to contribute to the creation of a more radically compassionate world.**

promises to protect us—as long as we don't ask too many probing questions—I don't think the present situation is hopeless.

Earlier this year, we witnessed the second annual World Social Forum (WSF)—a counter-summit to the World Economic Forum—held in Porto

Alegre, Brazil. This diverse group of 50,000 grassroots peace and justice activists, many of whom were anarchists who wanted no part of the official WSF conference, were all there to develop a process for globalization "from the bottom-up" under the visionary banner, "Another World is Possible." Moreover, massive actions of resistance to neoliberal corporate globalization organizations continue to be waged around the world, vividly demonstrating a growing movement of people who refuse to be silenced. The commitment and camaraderie of these and other activists help allay my fears and encourage me to transform them into a defiant determination to continue to speak out and to contribute to the creation of a more radically compassionate world.

## the motorist

by Andrei Codrescu

**W**e stand at a great crossroads in history. If we go right, we are liable to bump into ourselves coming from the left. And vice-versa. But we do agree on one thing: our national interest requires that we wean ourselves from dependence on fossil fuels. Some of us want an alternative to "oil," others just to "foreign oil," and others yet call for an "overhaul" of our entire energy policy, the whole kit-and-caboodle.

**T**he average motorist at the crossroads is bewildered. The stuff in his Engine has suddenly turned against the flag on his windshield. While thus Parked in bewilderment, the motorist sees huge trucks whistling right past him carrying hazardous wastes for burial in a faroff mountain. At least, he hopes it's far-off. He's not sure if anything is "far-off" anymore. Like those movies coming to a "theatre near you," horrors keep arriving at his doorstep. He'd like to go to a bar to think this over, but he's broke. After being laid off from Enron, he retreated for a while to the toolshed where he re-read Emerson on "self-reliance," then wondered just where that "self-reliance" went after he moved to the suburbs, enrolled his kids in private school, and put all his retirement in company stock.

**N**onetheless, he is a patriot and he's been fighting the War on Terror in his own way, by reporting every move made by the immigrants at the gas station. Perhaps this is what they mean by "foreign oil," he muses. In any case, he's been taking Lent seriously. No fun, no shoes, no service. We must be sober to fight the Axis of Evil. Definitely. The trouble is that he can't remember just who's a part of it, then it hits him. How could he have forgotten.

**T**he Axis of Evil is Fossil Fuels, Hazardous Waste, and Poverty—and it builds weapons of mass destruction every day. In fact, he himself is a pretty good example of what it's like to be skewered by the Axis of Evil. Shish-kebab! He is shish-kebab! He turns the key in the engine and, without another look at the crossroads, turns left. Eventually, if he keeps going, he's going to meet himself coming in the other way. Either that, or he'll run out of gas.



# What can we say?

## First-hand reflections from the Middle East

By Julie Herrada

**B**y the time most of you see this, you will have already read dozens of disturbing and horrifying accounts from international peace activists, solidarity workers, and others who have recently traveled to Palestine to participate in, observe, and learn about the situation that has grabbed the world's attention for the past few months. That fact troubled me while sitting down to write. What more could I say about my journey that would interest anyone? My hope is that I can convey my experience in such a way that does not simply echo what others have already said or written, and that you don't glance at this article with indifference ("not another article about the Middle East crisis.")

Each account is significant; not only in the information it conveys, but also in the cathartic effect the writing or telling of it has on those who were there to witness it. We all have different reasons for going, but the common theme was that we were there to see for ourselves and to return to tell others the truth about what we saw. My biggest fear right now is that we will become immune to the stories and images to which we are constantly exposed. We'll suffer from information overload, become even more resentful of the media's focus and bias at the expense of many other important struggles and injustices in the world, and that we will not take seriously enough the grave human rights abuses occurring right now in the Middle East.

I have to believe that this is a situation we can rectify, in our lifetimes. The Israeli regime has often been compared with that of South Africa's apartheid. It took many years of activism, and international pressure, but if apartheid in South Africa was defeated, we can overcome the cultural and religious supremacists in the Middle East as well.

I was very intrigued when first hearing about the efforts of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), activists from many countries, including Americans and Israelis who put their own bodies on the front lines to protect Palestinians. I deeply admire the work they do, and

although I can see myself doing such work, I didn't want my first visit to the Middle East to be that kind of trip. I felt I had a lot to learn and wanted a broader introduction to the country, the people, and the culture than such a journey could offer. My journey in April was led by two people from Ann Arbor, Michigan, Alan Haber and Odile Hugonot-Haber, who have traveled to the Middle East each spring for the past ten years as part of the Megiddo Peace Project ([www.umich.edu/~megiddo/](http://www.umich.edu/~megiddo/)). Because they are trusted friends, dedicated activists, and visionaries, I felt I would get a well-rounded tour. They know many peace activists in Israel and are familiar with the culture and geography of the land.

### The Peace Table

**T**he underlying purpose of our trip was to bring the Peace Table to the region. The four-foot diameter, cherry wood table was crafted by Haber in 1976 and is described in the Megiddo website as "beautiful by all accounts, receptive to all outstanding questions, aesthetically transforming the square of earth to the circle of heaven, with nothing lost, built with the vision of a peace meeting to end all wars." It was shipped to Israel ahead of us and was waiting for us when we arrived.

Haber envisions his work as embodying the principle of "Art for Peace." He sees it as a negotiating table to bring to it those who

will not budge. However, the recent Israeli invasion into the West Bank derailed much of the idealism inherent in the table.

This same table served at the opening session of the 1999 Hague Appeal for Peace, the world's largest ever peace meeting. Nobel Peace prizewinners Desmond Tutu, Rigoberta Menchu, and Jose Ramos Horta sat around Haber's creation at a session moderated by David Andrews, Ireland's Minister of Foreign Affairs. They talked of what they had learned in their peace efforts in South Africa, Guatemala, and East Timor. The table also served in the room where different meetings discussed small arms dealing, child soldiers, nuclear weapons, the war in the Sudan, (continued on next page)

**It took many years of activism, and international pressure, but if apartheid in South Africa was defeated, we can overcome the cultural and religious supremacists in the Middle East as well.**



American protester at checkpoint. Photo by Julie Herrada.



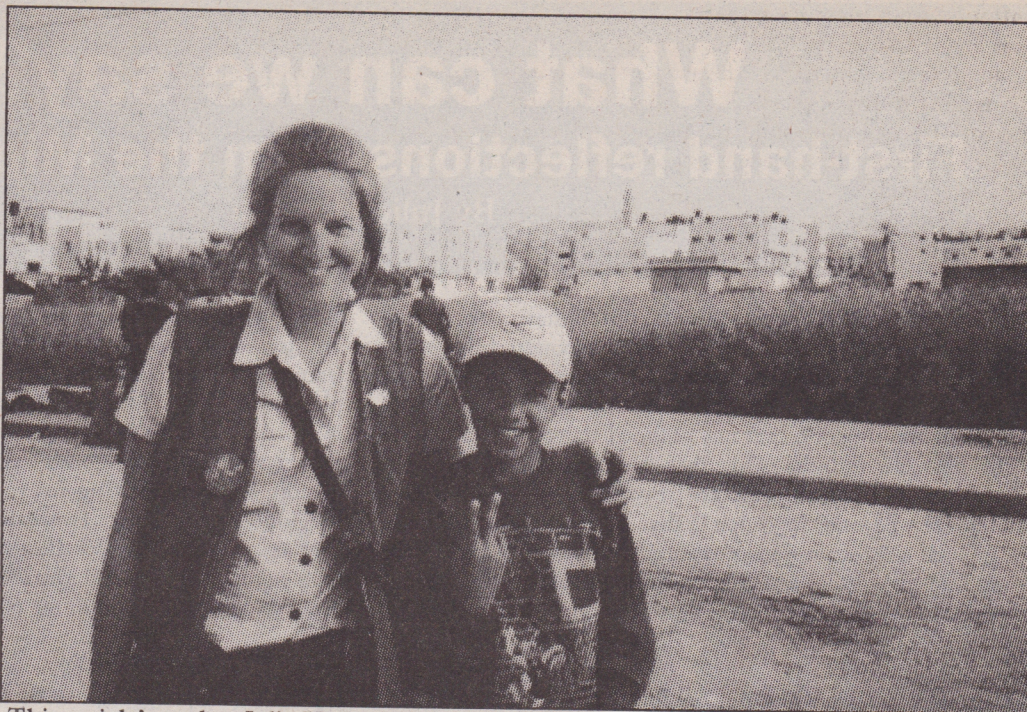
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and two sessions on Jerusalem. This table is legendary. Although the idea to bring the table to the Middle East had been alive for decades, it was the first time it had been brought there.

Because I'm not an artist, and more secular than spiritual, I felt only peripherally invested in this "art for peace" project. Since then, however, I've discovered the value in the creative ideals represented by the table. People cope with the trauma and pain of injustice in many ways, and the more constructive and imaginative approaches there are, the better. My main objective in the Middle East was to learn and witness, to meet and talk with people, to participate in actions and demonstrations, and to find some tiny bit of humanity in a region that has been fractured and torn by war since well before my birth. Because of the intense amount of activity throughout my stay, I constantly absorbed information and a continuous sensation of sights, sounds, and smells from the different cultures with which I came in contact. The intense amount of activity I participated in during a relatively short amount of time created an ultimately moving experience.

### A diverse international peace movement

My group met with many people working for peace in Israel and Palestine. The peace movement there is broad and varied, and each group, if not each person, has his or her own ideas and hopes for a just solution to the conflict.

Because my guides were familiar with the movement and those involved in it, I was able to meet Jessica Montell, Executive Director of B'Tselem (<http://www.btselem.org/>), the largest human rights organization in Israel; Jeff Halper, Coordinator of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (<http://www.icahd.org/eng/>); Elias Jabbour, Director of The House of Hope International Peace Center (<http://www.hohpeacecenter.org/>); Lily Traubmann, Political Coordinator of Bat Shalom (<http://www.batshalom.org/>); Gila Svirsky, coordinator of the Coalition of Women for a Just Peace (<http://www.coalitionofwomen4peace.org/>); Ibrahim El-Hawa, who works with the Jahalin Bedouins, as well as people working at the Alternative Information Center (<http://www.alternativenews.org/>), and many other activists from various peace groups who are, in creative ways, resisting Israel's war.



This article's author Julie Herrada and a Jenin resident. Photo by Odile Hugonot-Haber.

**My main objective in the Middle East was to learn and witness, to meet and talk to people, to participate in actions and demonstrations, and to find some tiny bit of humanity in a region that has been fractured and torn by war since well before my birth.**

Every one of these people took the time to talk with us about the situation and the work they are doing. I felt privileged to have such entrée, although I also had the sense anyone would have received the same treatment. Most people there, both Palestinians and Israelis, are very receptive to outside involvement in helping to solve the crisis, because they realize they cannot solve it by themselves. They are all but paralyzed by fear and frustration.

We met dozens of peace activists from France, Italy, England, Holland, Scotland, Canada, Turkey, and the US, and participated in many peace demonstrations, rallies, and meetings, in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Tel Aviv, allowing me broad exposure to the various activities and activists. We brought the Peace Table to a demonstration outside Ariel Sharon's house, where it was well received by the mostly liberal Israeli crowd, but at Tel Megiddo National Park, the anticipated biblical site of Armageddon, it was perceived by park officials as being "too political" and we were not allowed to place it there.

### Journey to Jenin

On April 23, we joined a delegation of about twenty internationals and Palestinians, who were invited to tour Jenin in the West Bank following the withdrawal of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). Our group included Kathy Kelly, cofounder of

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Voices in the Wilderness; Bill Thomson, an Ann Arbor psychologist and professor who trains Palestinian mental health care workers in trauma treatment skills; Dr. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, professor of Social Work and Criminology at the Faculty of Law, Hebrew University, Jerusalem; Sama Aweidah, Director of the Women's Studies Center in Jerusalem; Lloyd Quinan, Member of the Scottish Parliament, and several peace activists like ourselves.

The Jenin camp, created in 1953, was one of the many areas that came under IDF attack in late March. During the battle for Jenin, at least 23 Israeli soldiers were killed as well as an unknown number of Palestinians. (Recent reports indicate that perhaps double that number of IDF soldiers perished, but it is unconfirmed as of this writing.) Although the army pulled out of Jenin, the Israeli government refused to allow rescue workers, medical aid, reporters, or fact-finding teams into the camp. Those who enter the camp do so through illegal means, but we decided to risk the journey.

Getting there was not easy. We chartered a tour bus to drive us from Jerusalem to an Arab village about fifteen kilometers from Jenin. We arrived at a point where we had to disembark and walk about two kilometers down a dirt road that was obstructed so cars couldn't use it. When we reached the end of that road we were in another Arab village, and walked a little farther where taxicabs were waiting to drive us into Jenin. Our drivers knew how to avoid the checkpoints, and we were dropped off just inside the refugee camp, where several white-vested Union of Palestinian Medical Aid Relief Committee volunteers from Jenin met us.

There were crowds of Palestinians on the street, and immediately I could see fire damage to buildings around us. There was a noticeable pall over the people milling about, as they wandered about without purpose, stunned looks on their faces.

A somber young boy of about 12 approached me. He tried to speak, and although it became clear at once that we couldn't communicate with each other, I understood that he was suffering a

terrible loss. As we were led further into the camp, the damage became worse. At the end of the first street, the sight of the rubble and demolished houses was a shock to all of us. Most accounts describe it as being very similar to the damage of an earthquake; the difference is that after an earthquake there are rescue workers and other support at hand. Here, there was nothing.



**One of our guides told us that some of the wounded were run over several times (intentionally) by Israeli tanks, leaving only small pieces of skin and bones.**



(top) Destroyed ambulance outside Jenin hospital.  
(bottom) Israeli tank at Bethlehem checkpoint.  
Photos by Julie Herrada.

A couple of UN cars were parked outside the camp, but no rescue work or even fact-finding was being done. The sewer system had been damaged, and I saw local men working to repair it. We were told Red Cross workers were allowed to deliver water each day, but we did not see any while we were there. One of our guides explained some of the IDF abuses witnessed against the residents of the camp. He said that men and women were ordered to undress in front of each other, and when two old men refused, they were shot. We were led into a house that was damaged from the inside, riddled with bullet holes and broken glass everywhere.

This was typical of many private homes we saw.

Inside Jenin Hospital, the Director, Dr. Mohammed Abu-Ghali, spoke to us for about 45 minutes. He estimated at least 300-400 people died (while the wounded numbered only 102), but B'Tselem's Jessica Montell later disputed these figures. There is still no official death count. Many more injured were allowed to die because the soldiers would not let anyone provide medical treatment for them. One of our guides told us that some of the wounded were run over several times (intentionally) by Israeli tanks, leaving only small pieces of skin and bones.

Then, we were taken to see a young boy of about 10 in the hospital who was severely wounded. He had lost his arm, both legs were broken, and he was blinded. He was on a respirator. He was like a wounded animal, and I didn't think he was going to make it. His father was there, and when he began to speak to us, he broke down and cried.

He said, "My son lost his arm, so I lost my arm, my son lost his eyes, so I lost my eyes; it would be better for him if he died." It was so tragic; my words cannot describe it. We heard later on, after arriving

back in Jerusalem, that the boy died that evening.

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Walking through the camp again, the young children seemed to be in good spirits, undoubtedly excited by the international visitors, but it was plain to anyone that the older children and adults were in a state of shock and despair. They do not understand why this has been allowed to happen to them, and what can you say? The official Israeli explanations are not satisfactory; they do not convince any of us that this action was justified.

We walked back through the camp to the place where our taxis were waiting, but before making the three-hour trip back we were invited to eat by the medical aid relief volunteers who had led us through the camp. They made lunch for us, which included hommous, fresh pita bread, falafel, and mint tea. This is the Arab way. You do not get invited without getting fed. It was remarkable that these people who have nothing found a way to welcome us as if we were their family. We ate and then got back into our taxis for the journey home.

On the obstructed dirt road back to the bus there were some

Palestinians trying to take clothing and blankets to the people in Jenin. Israeli soldiers arrived and started shooting at them, so they dropped their relief supplies and ran away. Since they couldn't get to where a car could meet them, we helped bring the clothes down the road. The soldiers wouldn't shoot at us, but they did try to stop us. They began yelling, "No pictures!" so I put down my video camera and turned on a hidden audio disk recorder that was in my pocket.

There was a heated confrontation between two members from our group and two of the soldiers, one in English and the other in Hebrew, which lasted for about 20 minutes. Meanwhile, the rest of the group took advantage of the diversion to help deliver the clothes. We were hassled by the soldiers for another half hour, by now surrounded by about ten IDF soldiers, having to show our passports, have our backpacks searched, and told we were using an "illegal" road. They were angry about having to let us go, but there wasn't much they could do to us. We were finally allowed to board the bus and drove back to Jerusalem, arriving by 10 p.m., physically exhausted and emotionally drained. That's how I spent my 41st birthday.

## Israeli anarchists and Palestinian statehood

At a large demonstration in Tel Aviv on April 27, there was a contingent of people waving black flags. Later on, I spotted a black flag with a circle-A, and approached the young man hold-

ing it. I asked him about the other black flags, and he replied that the plain black flag symbolizes solidarity with the refuseniks, Israeli soldiers who refuse to fight in the Occupied Territories. I wondered whether anarchists in Israel support the formation of a Palestinian state. He said he couldn't speak for all anarchists in Israel, but that personally, he thinks it is needed in the short run as a transitional phase, but that eventually even the state of Israel should be eliminated, because by its nature, it is a racist state. This presents an ideological predicament for anarchists.

How do we reconcile our solidarity with the people of Palestine when we don't support the creation of another nation-state? If the Palestinians are demanding their own state, does that mean

**How do we reconcile our solidarity with the people of Palestine when we don't support the creation of another nation-state? If the Palestinians are demanding their own state, does that mean we should support them? Like the many other struggles for self-determination, anarchists may find they are at odds with the rest of the peace movement over this issue.**

we should support them? Like the many other struggles for self-determination, anarchists may find they are at odds with the rest of the peace movement over this issue. But to me, that issue is purely ideological when juxtaposed with the current issue of equality and human rights for which the Palestinians are struggling every moment of every day. Even though the desired result is not the same, we should support the cries for justice. Perhaps

one day, more people will realize, as many Jews in Israel are now learning, that having your own state does not protect you.

To put the Israeli anarchist movement in perspective, an older radical I met estimated the number of anarchists in all of Israel to be about 200, "but about 170 of them are lifestyle anarchists," he added.

I would be remiss if I did not point out the psychological effects of the suicide bombers. All Israelis face the randomness of the attacks upon both working and middle class people. Most Israelis, even the lefties, anarchists, and peace activists, have had close calls or lost someone they know to a suicide bomber attack. But many see the withdrawal of Israel from the Occupied Territories as the critical first step to the security of Israeli people.

Jeff Halper, an activist against housing demolitions, says that the role of Israeli peace activists is "helplessness in the face of overwhelming force and callousness, yet faith that [you]... will generate the international pressures necessary to end the occupation once and for all." Elias Jabbour, from the House of Hope, is adamant that we must not be silent about the atrocities going on in the Occupied Territories, that "someone will eventually hear us." Those are appeals I cannot ignore.

—Ann Arbor, May 2002



# Remember Sacco & Vanzetti



**Immigrant anarchists  
executed by the state**

**75 years ago on August 23, 1927**

**Stop State Killings!  
Abolish the Prison Industrial Complex!**

**"I would not wish to a dog or to a snake, to the most low and misfortunate creature of the earth—I would not wish to any of them what I have had to suffer for things that I am not guilty of. But my conviction is that I have suffered for things I am guilty of. I am suffering because I am a radical and indeed I am a radical; I have suffered because I was an Italian, and indeed I am an Italian; I have suffered more for my family and for my beloved than for myself; but I am so convinced to be right that if you could execute me two times, and if I could be reborn two other times, I would live again to do what I have done already."**

**—Bartolomeo Vanzetti,  
on trial 1927**

## **Celebrating Judi Bari Day in Oakland**

(continued from page 3)

and fight like hell for the living," Judi was a tireless, pacifist fighter for the Earth and its inhabitants.

Her "revolutionary ecology" was her expression of love for life, especially the magnificent redwood trees that she chose to live amongst. This case against the FBI was important to Judi as yet another prong in the struggle for social and ecological justice. "This case is not just about me or Darryl or Earth First," Judi once said. "This case is about the rights of all political activists to engage in dissent without having to fear the government's secret police." Imploring the FBI to stop attacking activists, she always said that "the FBI should find the bomber and fire him."

In honor of this auspicious day, we held a spirited rally in front of the Oakland Federal Building, where the trial is taking place, and not far from where Judi and Darryl were bombed. Physically gone, Judi and her spirit were there nevertheless.

While the cops watched, we were speaking, singing, dancing, howling, and proudly displaying our colors like political peacocks—in addition to distributing and sharing flyers and free bottles of organic tea. There were, of course, lots of fiddles and anyone who had a musical instrument was encouraged to join in. The rest of us sang along to such songs as "Fiddle Down the FBI," a reference to the FBI having seized Judi's childhood fiddle and never returning it, which included a chorus of "Fiddle up the justice/Fiddle down the lies/Fiddle up the truth/Fiddle down the FBI." It was a rally, but it was also a festival, and we were all celebrating together. Amidst signs asking "Who Bombed Judi Bari?" and declaring that "You Can't Bomb the Truth," we sang. Across from posters referring to the FBI as "Forever Busting the Innocent" and "Fires, Bombing, and Intimidation," we danced. And under banners urging us to "Rise Up" and that "Action is the antidote for despair," we cheered.

Regardless of what decision the jury comes back with, as Darryl said in his speech, history will record that we are on the side of truth and justice and that the FBI is on the side of deception and repression. Naturally, we all howled.







# MY SUMMER VACATION IN AFGHANISTAN

by Peter Lamborn Wilson

First time in Afghanistan, late winter 1968/9, making the Overland Trail fast as possible through howling cold of Central Asian steppes. Minibus from Mashhad to Herat, arriving at the border crossing: dark, dusty, cold and bleak. (Later, I was to discover that somehow Afghan border-crossings were *always* dark dusty cold bleak, even on nice summer days.) Bus-load of hippies pulls up at the checkpoint. Suddenly a huge Afghan officer with bristling mustaches and fierce scowl thrusts himself into the bus: "Any you got *hashish*?" he screamed.

Chorus of "No," "No," "Not me," "Not me, Sir"—squeaky and scared. What the hell?!

"Ssssooo. . ." hissed the officer, reaching menacingly into his jacket . . . "You like to buy?" he whipped out a chunk of hash the size of a loaf of Wonder Bread. "Very good, grade-A Afghani."

I don't know exactly when the Overland Route to India really opened. I presume not till after WW II, maybe not really till the early 60s. It lasted till 1976 when the Communists took over in Afghanistan and effectively closed the borders. Then, in 1978, with the Iranian Revolution and the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, the Route was sealed, perhaps forever. Like the Silk Route (which really functioned only during the Han and T'ang Dynasties and under the Mongols, and even then only sporadically), the Overland Route represented a unique falling-together of political and economic forces for peaceful trade against fissiparous war and banditry. A rare "window of opportunity" for Marco Polo—or for me. We hippies, ignorant of history, never realized our once-in-a-millennium stroke of luck. We were . . . just there, man; just passing through.

\* \* \*

A few vivid memories from that first dash across Afghanistan: A changing money at the National Bank in Herat: —mud floor with chickens pecking in the dirt. An Afghan soldier-bank guard asleep leaning on his rifle, barrel down in the mud; the frigid austere 5¢ per night hotel; a horde of Kuchi nomads on the move along the Herat-Kandahar highway: thousands of them, scores of black tents, hundreds of camels and donkeys. People with pale blue and green eyes, some of the kids blond.

(Note: I recently read that the Kuchis are Pathans but they don't really look it. They may have a client relationship with a Pathan tribe without actually being related to them. I'd guess the nomads are "pure" Indo-Aryan remnants, like the Kaffirs or the Dards. But I've never

found any ethnography on the Kuchis.)

In the public park in Kabul, some old men in turbans and traditional gear praying, sipping tea, smoking hookas. It occurs to me for the first time that in a society not devoted to constant "progress" and change, old people have a different meaning. They're not obsolete human junk, they're repositories of accumulated experience, maybe even "wisdom." I watch the graybeards being elaborately polite to each other, like a ritual. I'd always assumed that "good manners" equals hypocritical bullshit, unworthy of an individualist and conscious rebel. But suddenly I begin to suspect that there might be something beautiful about manners, like an art form.

\* \* \*

The Kuchi women (like most nomads) were not veiled, and in Kabul one could see modernized Afghan women without veils, but all other women over twelve wore burqas, total sacks, the most extreme purdah in the world. I never met any Afghan women. Most Western women, especially hippies, were so shocked by the burqa they never even attempted to penetrate this secret world. I only know about it through books, especially those of my old friends Chuck and Cherry Lindholm (anthropologists from Harvard) — Cherry covered Pathan women while Chuck dealt with the men. The novelist Doris Lessing (who followed Afghan sufi guru Idries Shah) visited Peshawar during the Russian period, interviewed Afghan women refugees, and wrote a good but small book on the subject.

(Note: Idries Shah wrote a weird novel, *Kara Kush*, a fantasy of Sufi resistance against the Russians, badly written but worth reading.)

One thing I learned by talking to men however was that many of them could not afford to marry, since Afghan custom requires the groom's family to pay a bride price, which at that time could run to hundreds or even thousands of dollars. The burqa therefore cannot be seen simply as a symbol of oppression of women (though it is that) but also as a symbol of the *value of daughters*.

Societies without dowry customs may paradoxically seem to allow women more "freedom" because they value them *less* than societies with bride-price customs. In any case, sexual tension is high in Afghan society. It's not surprising that the Taliban came to power on an anti-rape platform (at least according to their own propaganda). Also, the notion that Moslems "hate women" because they

**A journey through  
Afghanistan over  
30 years ago offers  
not just a memoir,  
but a look at what  
tribal anarchy and  
Sufis, hashish and  
burqas, suggest  
about that country  
today.**



veil them must be weighed against the conscious beliefs of most Moslem men: i.e., that they value women far *more* than —say— Hollywood America, where women are used to sell products through fleshly exposure. Given sexual relations in Afghanistan, the burqa can be seen as a form of freedom from harassment and exploitation. I'm not saying this is my opinion. I'm just trying to explain the attitude of the average Afghan.

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After a couple years in India I was expelled for overstaying my visa and headed back to Afghanistan. Again it was winter, I was stuck in Kabul waiting for a money-order to arrive, penniless, in another frigid hotel, holed up with a German hippy who was shooting raw opium four or five times a day. At one point, I had to visit the U.S. Embassy about some problem, perhaps a visa extension. The vice-consul I met was a young guy from the Midwest, not much older than me. This was his first posting abroad. As I seemed friendly he kind of opened up, expressing amazement at my foolhardiness in wandering alone around Afghanistan. He admitted he himself was terrified. With a shaking finger he pointed at the window, "There . . . there's no law out there!" he quavered. I kept a straight face, but secretly I was quite pleased.

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I got in so much trouble overstaying visas that when I finally left the country; an official wrote a huge essay (in Pashtu) in my passport, which had two 12-page accordion fold-out additions full of highly dubious seals and stamps. (I was especially fond of a page of tax-stamps from the Libyan monarchy.) An Afghan friend translated the essay for me later. Basically it I.D.'d me as a penniless, drug-addled hippy and suggested strongly that I never be allowed back into the country. Later, however, this passport was stolen—by the Visa Office in Islamabad, Pakistan—and presumably sold on the black market for \$2000 (so one lone friendly official told me in secret). When I described what had happened to the U.S. Consul there in Islamabad he screamed, "What, again?!" So, anyway, I got a new passport and could now safely go back to Afghanistan; and I did, many times.

Around October 1971, the owner of my hotel in Kandahar invited me to spend the evening smoking opium. When night fell cold clear and moonlit, we left town in a horse-drawn gari for the teriak-khaneh, the O-den, quite a drive over the desert to a huge old mudbrick, multi-domed caravanserai. There was no electricity, but moon and stars illuminated the scene. A caravan had come in earlier and settled down for the night. Literally about 100 camels in the courtyard of the caravanserai plumped on the dirt with their legs tucked under them, each one glowing in the moonlight like a teapot the size of a Cadillac: big double-humped "Bactrian" camels.

Later that winter I suffered on through to Bactria itself, to Mazar-i Sharif, over mountain passes in a blizzard in an unheated bus. Sometime in the middle of the night and howling snowstorm the bus stopped—to let a camel caravan cross the highway. Shivering and amazed I counted about 25 big Bactrians, humps frosted with snow, and heard for the first time the clanking of caravan bells, a sound used as a cliché in Persian poetry to signify "departure" with all its sadness and anticipation. The caravaneers muffled in padded sheepskins and turbans of snow yanked the undulating giants by ropes through their noses, exhorting and cursing as the beasts honked and groaned. Then they disappeared into the storm heading north for the Soviet border.

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Later, I managed to get to Balkh, the ancient capital of Bactria. The old city walls with watchtowers are still crumbling under

the blows they received 700 years ago from the Mongols. We drove through a vast gate into a city that wasn't there, then kept on driving. On the inside of the wall was the same desert as on the outside. I think it was sixteen kilometres, all inside the wall, before we reached the center and the shattered remains of Balkh: a ruined mausoleum (the dome collapsed) still flowery with patches of Timurid tile: the tomb of a Sufi shaykh in the line of Ibn 'Arabi. In a circle around the tomb, a dozen or so teahouses were huddled together—nothing else, not even trees—just Central Asian desert and patches of snow. The great "Mother of Cities," birthplace of Jalaloddin Rumi, already a metropolis when Alexander conquered it: nothing now but a flattened waste and the Ozymandian stump of a cenotaph.

There's an old Sufi legend about Gengis Khan (said to be part of *The Secret History of the Mongols*, but I could never find it in any translation): he's just fourteen and hiding out alone in the desert from his enemies; he goes to sleep in a cave and dreams of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara who gives him a gold ring and tells him that his mission is to go forth and destroy civilization, to erase the blight of cities from the world. When he wakes, the ring is still on his finger. As far as Balkh is concerned, Gengis Khan did his duty, or one of his descendents did it for him, I forget which.

Only one thing kept Balkh alive in 1971: hashish. The chai-khanehs there were set up to host a charas bazaar, and the famous north Afghani green-gold enticed gourmet connoisseurs from all over the universe. I wasn't there to buy bulk, however, just a few "candy canes" of the Number One, so I drank sweet green tea with cardamon and sat around sampling the product with the extremely genial host.

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The "dialect" of Persian spoken in Balkh and northeastern Afghanistan is called Dari; but in fact it's not a dialect, but purer and more archaic than Iranian Persian (Farsi), rather like the Elizabethan English spoken by country people in remote parts of eastern America. Once in Tehran I met a professor of Persian linguistics from the University and he told me about his recent vacation in Balkh. "I was sitting in one of the chai-khanehs, you know, the ones where they sell charas, chatting with the proprietor, an extremely nice man and polite to a fault. Suddenly, I burst into tears.





He was very upset. 'Was it something I said, dear sir?'

"Yes," I sobbed, 'something you said.'

"Ah, honorable Presence, how have I offended thee?"

"No, no! you didn't offend me. It was your use of the subjunctive! So beautiful! Like visiting the 15th century!"

Two border towns in Pakistan—Quetta and Peshawar—have been mentioned in the news lately as refugee centers. Peshawar is mostly a Pathan city; Quetta has Pathans but also Baluchis, Brahuis (a mysterious people speaking a Dravidian language), and sprinklings of Hazaras, Turks, Persians, Punjabis, etc.—very cosmopolitan, a smuggler's paradise. One special feature of Quetta were the saki-khanehs or teahouses, where hash was served in huge hubblebubbles. I spent months in one that was frequented by ne'er-do-well Brahui "princes" and presided over by a witty disreputable Sayyid (descendant of the Prophet); I divided my day between the saki-khaneh and the teriak-khaneh (opium den) run by a genial Uzbek called Khan Baba. Quetta food is famous: barbecued meats and rich milk sweets are the specialties. By comparison Afghanistan itself was not what we hippies called a "food trip." Even in Kabul restaurants the cuisine was that of poor shepherds: tough kebabs, greasy pilaw, flat bread, and tea (either black or green, always toothachingly sweet).

Of course, given the crisp weather and the hash, one was always hungry and appreciative of even small treats such as yoghurt or leek dumplings. One recipe I recall fondly: mutton meatballs fried in mutton fat with tomatoes and onions; add eggs to make an omelette swimming in grease; mop up with flat bread. Afghan bread though simple is real staff-of-life stuff. I'm certain bread in the Neolithic tasted just like that, bursting with wheat flavor and slightly smoky from the wood fired clay ovens.

Peshawar always reminded me of Dodge City or maybe Tombstone. A tough border town at the foot of the Kyber Pass, capital of "Pushtunistan" (the idle dream of Pathan nationalists), where the Great Game still seemed to go on as if Kipling had never died. The Peshawar bazaar is famous for its "break fast" delicacies during Ramadan, the month of fasting (and feasting). I recall for instance spiced larks in brochette. I learned to appreciate the Pathans here as extreme examples of the Mountain Warrior ethos, like the Kurds: the best friends and the worst enemies in the world. (Tibetans are really mountain warriors, but Buddhists, like the ancient Afghans.) Like the old Scottish clansmen, all Pathans are "noble" even when dirt poor, and they act like noblemen: proud, self-assured, unconquered.

I know I'm guilty of stereotyping here, but the types seem very real when you're sojourning amongst them. And the Pathans, unlike say the Scots or Tibetans, are still actively engaged in war, Hatfield/McCoy blood feuds in the 1970s, real full-scale war in the 80s and 90s, etc. In the Khyber Pass, the tribes ruled openly and in total disregard of all government. Up there, gunsmiths could copy any small weapon in world history from a flintlock (still very popular because you can make your own bullets) to an Uzi or AK-47, complete with serial numbers. Wild-looking longhaired types with crossed bandoliers and rifles. Shops full of smuggled

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electronic goods and gaudy jewelry.

The term "tribal anarchy" has been used to describe this situation. In effect, no central government has ever controlled the tribal hinterlands of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The unit of freedom, to coin a phrase, is not the individual, but the coherent group: family, clan, tribe. The successful military forces of Central Asia are always tribal confederations, usually with a charismatic khan (like Gengis) to unite them. When the leader dies, the confederation usually breaks up and returns to "tribal anarchy."

In the 70s, people said the king—Zahir Shah—controlled Kabul and the other major cities and highways but the tribes controlled everything else. (Note: two stories I heard about the king: When

I asked someone "Where are all the famous Afghan hounds? Why haven't I seen any?" I was told that the king owned them all. Once in Herat, some dervishes gave me the best hashish I've ever smoked. One hit felt like 50 mic's of LSD. They told me that this grade AAA first-pressing charas, the finest few kilograms of Halkh's best, was reserved for a few special dervish shaykhs—and the king! Even if neither of these tales is true they reveal something about the magic of archetypes.)

Of course, tribal anarchy is not *anarchism*. For one thing, Islam—which has always been anti-tribal—has deeply influenced the Afghans and modified their customs. But I can't help thinking Bakunin might have admired the Pathans: the people armed, resisting all other powers. Even Marx and Engels sympathized with the Afghans, whom they felt had been betrayed by perfidious British foreign policy. The Afghans missed a lot of Imperialist/colonialist history. There's something to be said for fierce independence.

My favorite city in Afghanistan—the one I kept going back to again and again—was Herat. I felt quite at home in its decayed Persian ambience, more Persian even than Iran with all its oil money and "West-intoxication." The Timurid Mongols who ruled Herat in the 15th century loved Spring best of all its seasons, but I remember Herat in October when the sky was really a "turquoise dome," the air crisp and clean—no factories for thousands of kilometres in all directions!—smelling only of pine trees and distant mountains. Or December with snow on the pines and mud domes, starry nights, the smell of woodfires, the sound of horses' hooves. (Herat in the 70s still had more horsedrawn garis or droshkys than automobiles.) The Timurids had left traces, ruined mosques, tombs, minarets, encrusted with the most beautiful and vivid of all Islamic tilework. (I believe most of this was destroyed by the Russians in the 80s.) In the old city there was no electricity, a luddite paradise, night alleyways black as blindness. I remember stumbling back to my hotel from the teriak-khaneh, a cozy den under a dome in the old town. The owner, a sweet-tempered Hazara family man, had painted the ceiling of the dome with flowers, birds and pastoral scenes in Grandma Moses style, so that his customers would have something pleasant to enhance their *nusha'* or intoxication. In the Herat bazaar one might see hunting hawks for sale, or rainbow striped *chapans* like the wasp-waisted coats of courtiers in old miniatures. Herat teahouses had no tables or chairs but only wooden platforms called *takhts* (lit. "thrones") with carpets, sometimes outdoors under chenar trees or next to a little rivulet lined with watercress. Sometimes, bards played rebabs,



archaic instruments never seen nowadays in India or Iran, but mentioned often in medieval poetry.

Someone told me there were 500 sufi shrines in Herat. I only managed to visit a few of the major ones. I found those wandering dervishes who turned me on to the "royal" hashish in the tomb of the famous Timurid miniaturist Behzad, perched on a bare hillside outside the city with a view of the whole valley. Most sufis in Afghanistan belong to the Naqshbandi or the Qadiri orders, two of the biggest worldwide Sunni sufi *turuq*. Two of the mujaheddin militias during the Russian period consisted of these sufi orders armed and following their *pirs* (i.e., their gurus). The most famous saint of Herat was an 11th century sufi shaykh, 'Abdullah Ansari. I reached his tomb in Gazargah, a suburb of Herat, by horse carriage. The cargah or enclosure was rich and well-preserved, and the tombstone was amazing, a lacy cake of Koranic calligraphy carved in solid marble. Ansari's tomb enclosure was considered *bast*, a sanctuary for criminals. As with certain cathedral closes in medieval Europe, anyone—even a murderer—who takes refuge there is exempt from prosecution. We met a number of these fugitives: ragged and hungry-looking to be sure, and stuck inside a tiny garden. But the garden had cypress trees and mountain views, and the men were free inside the garden, not too miserable. In fact, they looked rather happy. Ansari's post-mortem influence is warm and forgiving. (All active sufi shrines seem to take on the personality of the dead saint.)



came to pay a visit to Jami, the great 15th century poet of Herat, by rolling on the ground—hence his name which means Papa Roller. An Islamic Holy Roller. At his tomb there's an open courtyard empty and covered with small pebbles. The pilgrim lies down with his head on a broken bit of gravestone, closes his eyes and recites a prayer. Then—according to my informant—he *rolls*. If he's a "good Moslem" he ends up coming to a halt facing

Mecca. My informant was "Hajji," an extremely sharp young Herati merchant whose shop was my hangout. Hajji was not a sufi but—like all good traditional Afghans—he revered them highly.

He told me that a cousin of his, a terribly worldly and sinful young man, had openly mocked Baba Qaltan's "miraculous" tomb and announced his intention of making the pilgrimage and *refusing to roll*. So he did. He lay down and closed his eyes—and suddenly he was rolling, rolling around the courtyard in circles, out of control, around and around, faster and faster. His friends had to jump on his spinning body to stop it, drag it to a halt. Pebbles were embedded in his bleeding cheeks. "After that," said Hajji, "he became a believer."

I decided to try it. I followed the protocol exactly. The shrine attendant gave my shoulder a tiny nudge. I'll roll a bit, I thought, so as not to disappoint him.

All at once I felt the world tip over at a 45 degree angle. This is not a metaphor. I couldn't have stopped rolling if I'd tried. Nor could I open my eyes. Zoom! Finally, I rolled to a halt. "Masha'Allah! he's facing Mecca!" Believe me, I'm not a very psychic person. This was one of the weirdest experiences I've ever had.

Hajji, by the way, like many Afghans, was a phenomenal speed-chess player. I used to sit in his shop and watch him annihilate one Westerner after another. Ten seconds between moves! Good Moslems don't gamble, otherwise Hajji could have hustled professionally.

After Zahir Shah was ousted in 1973 by his cousin Da'ud, I was sitting in Hajji's shop one day and asked him how people felt about the fall of the Monarchy and the proclamation of a republic. "We Afghans have an old saying," he replied: "Black dog out, yellow dog in."

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The fact that the Taliban succeeded in taking over Afghanistan has always seemed to me a certain sign that the Afghanistan I knew was completely smashed to hell by the Russians and by civil war. I never heard any Afghan, however pious, praise "fundamentalism" or mullah-inspired bigotry. No one had ever heard of this perversion of Islam, which then existed only in Saudi Arabia. Afghan Islam was very orthopractic, but also very pro-sufi; essentially it was old-fashioned mainstream Islam. The idea of banning kite-flying would have probably caused hoots of incredulous

In the agony suffered for you,  
The wounded find the scent of balm:  
The memory of you consoles the souls of lovers.  
Thousands in every corner, seeking a glimpse of you,  
Cry out like Moses, "Lord, show me yourself!"  
I see thousands of lovers lost in a desert of grief,  
Wandering aimlessly and saying hopefully,  
"O God! O God!"  
I see breasts scorched by the burning separation from you,  
I see eyes weeping in love's agony.  
Dancing down the lane of blame and censure,  
Your lovers cry out, "Poverty is my source of pride!"  
Pir-i Ansar has quaffed the wine of longing:  
Like Majnun he wanders drunk and perplexed  
Through the world.

—Kwaja Adbullah Ansari,  
*Intimate Conversations*

Trans. by Wheeler M. Thackston  
(Paulist Press, N.Y., 1978)

In my book, *Scandal*, I've described a number of shrines in Herat, but I can't resist retelling the story of Baba Qaltan. This sufi



laughter. It must have taken twenty years of vicious neo-imperialist ideological cultural murder and oppression to make Talibanism look like the least of all available evils.

Since American readers have not, generally speaking, been offered a very multi-dimensional view of Islam and Central Asian culture, I thought it might be useful and amusing to dip into Afghan literature to discover what the great poets of the past might have said about the Taliban. Jalaloddin Rumi lived and died in Turkey, but was born in Balkh (his family fled the Mongol invasion) and wrote in Persian. In this poem he describes the post-mortem fate of a khwajah (pron. "khoja") a professional Islamic "cleric" and puritanical killjoy:

What's all this fanfare in the morning?  
 Ah! The khwajeh's going to the grave!  
 won't be back till late, I suppose:  
     a rather distant caravanserai, Death.  
 Instead of fair beauties he'll consort  
     with scorpions and snakes;  
 he's come from the silken pavilion  
     and inherited the sepulchre.  
 No more free lunch —  
     his neck is firmly broken.  
 How steadfastly,  
     how patiently he makes his exit.  
 While he lived no one  
     had the guts to cross him;  
 but now, one imagines, where he's going  
     the Khwajeh's own guts will be kebabs.  
 He does not go purified by purity,  
     nor in the way of fidelity,  
 he does not go in God-intoxication  
     but stone-blind drunk on lies . . .  
 The Khwajeh: how many fine robes tailored,  
     how many turbans fitted —  
 And now, undressed by God,  
     a naked nobody.  
 Every exile returns home at last,  
     East to East, West to West;  
 he who was born of devil's fire returns to fire,  
     he who was born of light to light.  
 Spawn of the imp,  
     he spread out the fingers of cruelty;  
 do you think it likely he'll be  
     rewarded with 78 hours?  
 The witty and nimble  
     are seated at God's dining table —  
 but he, unsalted, unripe,  
     is headed for the pits.

(adapted from the version by W.C. Chittick  
 and myself, in *Sacred Drift*)

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I must confess that I've never been able to overcome my Romanticism vis-à-vis Afghanistan or the "Orient" in general. At times I thought perhaps I should try. The "Subaltern Studies" critics of post-colonialism condemn all orientalism as "appropriation." I remember a Native American poet who summed it up thus: "First you took our land, then our languages, now you want our 'spirituality'!" It's easy to see that there can exist such a thing as *too much translation*. Why don't we palefaces get a culture of our own? As Ghandi told Mountbatten (when he asked the Mahatma, "What do you think of British Civilization?"), "Yes, it would have

been a good idea."

On the one hand: true. On the other hand . . .

It seems to me that there exists something I'd like to call an *oriental* Romanticism of the Orient. After all, the very idea of the romance came to us from the Islamic East. Emerson and Goethe sometimes seemed to think that Romanticism had been invented by the Persian poet Hafez of Shiraz. Chivalric love is probably an Islamic trope. This ill-defined *oriental* Romanticism doesn't situate itself dialectically in relation to the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, but to the "worldly" world in general, in an a-historical and existentialist manner. Love, the beloved, the saki and wine shop, music, dance, the rose garden and nightingale—all these exist both as sensual reality and as an "other world" of imagination and intoxication. One illustration: a poem by 'Abd al-Rahman Jami of Herat:

Edge of the garden, brink of the stream, lip of the goblet:  
 Saki, get up! Here abstinence is crime

If the old monk of the cloister is drunk on music's delight  
 I'll take the tavern—where this state endures forever

You touch cup's lip to your lip and I the drunkard  
 can't tell which is wine's ruby and which is yours

I'm not the only heart snared in your dark tresses:  
 wherever hearts are birds they're caught in your net

You draw the sword to slice my heart in two  
 —don't bother. One glance will do it

Don't discuss love's problems with the rationalists  
 and don't tell secrets: this is a public assembly

Jami's never seen wine nor cup yet he's drunk on your love:  
 This is the banquet of love. What room for cup or wine?

(adapted from E.G. Browne's version in  
*A Literary History of Persia*)

Maybe it's true that we hippies were merely casting our "gaze" on such treasures. But although the treasures are imaginal they're real enough. And unlike other "resources," the more such treasures are *taken* the more they are *given*. "Appropriation" renews the source rather than depletes it. When the treasures are withheld or refused, they die. Perhaps now they exist only in the form of a terrible nostalgia—a nostalgia so severe it could be called tragic. It's no wonder that some Afghan people look back on the 60s and 70s as a kind of Golden Age. They've even brought back old Zahir Shah out of mothballs in Rome, like a lucky talisman lost for thirty years, even propping him up again in Kabul. Probably a big mistake. Hell, nowadays you can't step in the same river even once.

But the romantic impulse seems irresistible. Who wouldn't regret the peace and prosperity, or the now-long-lost pleasures of rebabs in the teahouse or kite flying in the Spring? To have been there then is to be overwhelmed with regret. I offer no defense based on theory or ideology. You can despise me for it, but you can't argue me out of it. And you—you've seen all those images in *The New York Times* and on TV. You can't tear your gaze away, can you? What does it look like to you? Like the last real place in the world?

(November-December, 2001)



# A NEW DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

by Emma Goldman  
(originally published in  
*Mother Earth*,  
July 1909.)

When, in the course of human development, existing institutions prove inadequate to the needs of man, when they serve merely to enslave, rob, and oppress mankind, the people have the eternal right to rebel against, and overthrow, these institutions.

The mere fact that these forces—inimical to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—are legalized by statute laws, sanctified by divine rights, and enforced by political power, in no way justifies their continued existence.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all human beings, irrespective of race, color, or sex, are born with the equal right to share at the table of life; that to secure this right, there must be established among men economic, social, and political freedom; we hold further that government exists but to maintain special privilege and property rights; that it coerces man into submission and therefore robs him of dignity, self-respect, and life.

The history of the American kings of capital and authority is the history of repeated crimes, injustice, oppression, outrage, and abuse, all aiming at the suppression of individual liberties and the exploitation of the people. A vast country, rich enough to supply all her children with all possible comforts, and insure well-being to all, is in the hands of a few, while the nameless millions are at the mercy of ruthless wealth gatherers, unscrupulous lawmakers, and corrupt politicians. Sturdy sons of America are forced to tramp the country in a fruitless search for bread, and many of her daughters are driven into the street, while thousands of tender children are daily sacrificed on the altar of Mammon. The reign of these kings is holding mankind in slavery, perpetuating poverty and disease, maintaining crime and corruption; it is fettering the spirit of liberty, throttling the voice of justice, and degrading and oppressing humanity. It is engaged in continual war and slaughter, devastating the country and destroying the best and finest qualities of man; it nurtures superstition and ignorance, sows prejudice and strife, and turns the human family into a camp of Ishmaelites.

We, therefore, the liberty-loving men and women, realizing the great injustice and brutality of this state of affairs, earnestly and boldly do hereby declare, That each and every individual is and ought to be free to own himself and to enjoy the full fruit of his labor; that man is absolved from all allegiance to the kings of authority and capital; that he has, by the very fact of his being, free access to the land and all means of production, and entire liberty of disposing of the fruits of his efforts; that each and every individual has the unquestionable and unabridgeable right

CAPITALISM  
MUST BE  
DESTROYED



of free and voluntary association with other equally sovereign individuals for economic, political, social, and all other purposes, and that to achieve this end man must emancipate himself from the sacredness of property, the respect for man-made law, the fear of the Church, the cowardice of public opinion, the stupid arrogance of national, racial, religious, and sex superiority, and from the narrow puritanical conception of human life. And for the support of this Declaration, and with a firm reliance on the harmonious blending of man's social and individual tendencies, the lovers of liberty joyfully consecrate their uncompromising devotion, their energy and intelligence, their solidarity and their lives.



# Dances with Feminists

by Alix Kates Shulman

If I can't dance, I don't want to be in your revolution," said Emma Goldman (1869-1940), feminist heroine, anarchist activist, editor, writer, teacher, jailbird, and general trouble-maker. Or did she?

Perhaps she said, "If I can't dance I don't want to be part of your revolution," as my purple T-shirt claims under a picture of Emma looking demure in a wide-brimmed hat. Or was it rather, "If I can't dance to it, it's not my revolution," as the quote appears in a 1983 "non-sexist yet traditional" Passover Haggadah?

In fact, though the sentiment is indeed Emma Goldman's, one she frequently pronounced and acted upon, she wrote none of the above, notwithstanding that each of these versions and more has been attributed to her on buttons, posters, banners, T-shirts, bumper stickers, and in books and articles, for nearly twenty years.

Here, rather, is what she did say, in her 1931 autobiography *Living My Life*: "At the dances I was one of the most untiring and gayest. One evening a cousin of Sasha [Alexander Berkman], a young boy, took me aside. With a grave face, as if he were about to announce the death of a dear comrade, he whispered to me that it did not behoove an agitator to dance. Certainly not with such reckless abandon, anyway. It was undignified for one who was on the way to become a force in the anarchist movement. My frivolity would only hurt the Cause.

"I grew furious at the impudent interference of the boy. I told him to mind his own business, I was tired of having the Cause constantly thrown into my face. I did not believe that a Cause which stood for a beautiful ideal, for anarchism, for release and freedom from conventions and prejudice, should demand the denial of life and joy. I insisted that our Cause could not expect me to become a nun and that the movement should not be turned into a cloister. If it meant that, I did not want it.

"I want freedom, the right to self-expression, everybody's right to beautiful, radiant things.' Anarchism meant that to me, and I would live it in spite of the whole world—prisons, persecution, everything. Yes, even in spite of the condemnation of my own comrades I would live my beautiful ideal."

[*Living My Life* (New York: Knopf, 1934), p. 56]

As I may, inadvertently and indirectly, bear some responsibility for the extrapolation from authentic text to familiar paraphrase, I would like to confess and set the record straight. Here is what happened. Sometime early in 1973, I received a phone call from one Jack Frager, an old-time anarchist who worked in the anarchist center at 339 Lafayette Street in Lower Manhattan—a building where to this day various radical groups, including anarchists and the War Resisters League, have their offices. Like many dedicated radicals of the era before desktop publishing, he was a

printer; now he had the original idea to raise funds for the Cause by printing up a batch of Emma Goldman T-shirts to hawk in Central Park at the huge upcoming festival celebrating the end of the Vietnam War.

Having heard me lecture to the anarchists on Emma's feminism (after decades of obscurity during which all of her works were out of print, Emma was suddenly returning to the public eye as a hero of women's liberation), Jack was phoning to solicit my help.

I had recently published two books on Emma: a biography and a collection of her essays, both of which contained photos of her. He wondered if I might lend him a glossy photo from

which to print, and also asked me to suggest a phrase or slogan from Emma's writings suitable for emblazoning on T-shirts.

Delighted by the opportunity to publicize Emma's feminist side, particularly among followers sometimes reluctant to share her with any movement not strictly anarchist, I offered him a glossy shot of a stalwart, hatless Emma in a pince-nez and referred him to several prose passages, particularly the dancing episode, which seemed to me to embody her most lively feminist spirit. Did I propose Emma's statement about "freedom, the right to self-expression, everybody's right to beautiful radiant things"? Perhaps.

In gratitude, Jack promised me all the T-shirts I wanted, at cost. Several days later, when I picked up my shirts along with my precious glossy, I was surprised to find a succinct abridgement of Emma's dance story spread boldly across the shirt—the first (and most common) version of the now-famous slogan: "If I can't dance, I don't want to be in your revolution."

I searched Emma's texts for the statement; it was nowhere to be found. But Jack was so pleased, the festival was so soon, Emma looked so lively printed in red and black on a variety of rich background colors, that I hadn't the heart to register an objection in the name of scholarship. After all, the apocrypha appeared on a mere gross or two of T-shirts, which surely could not require the same standards of accuracy as, say, book blurbs extracted from book reviews—and the sentiment expressed was pure Emma indeed.

But history (and fashion) exploded so quickly in those hungrily feminist days that the slogan on the original shirt run was soon dispersed and copied and broadcast nationwide and abroad, underground and above, sometimes, absent a text to be checked against, changing along the way like a child's game of Telephone, until Jack's initial lighthearted liberties had taken wing as quotable lore and soared up into the realm of myth.

When all my shirts from the original batch had been given away to friends and my own worn to a rag, I decided to buy another. Only the new shirt, purchased in an uptown bookstore, sported a different picture of Emma—this time in a floppy hat—and a different version of the by now legendary legend, different still from the one I sometimes flaunt on a button. But, hey, if you can't wear what you like, who wants to be in your revolution?





# While Yugoslavia Burned, the Left Looked the Other Way

by Peter Lippman



"Kosovo" — Richard Mock

## readers respond

Editors' note: In the following pages, we feature two essays by readers. The first is Peter Lippman's "While Yugoslavia Burned, the Left Looked the Other Way," a response to Bob Myers' "Ethnic Cleansing in the Former Yugoslavia" (published in the Spring 2002 FE). Second, we're printing "Marcos: The Zapatistas' Unknown Icon" by a subscriber in England. Written last year, this piece may appear dated, but those of us who read it found it inspiring. From time to time, we hope to feature more writing by our readers—when space allows it and the quality of your work demands it.

Very few Westerners paid much attention to Yugoslavia before its decline in the late 1980s. When then-president of Serbia Slobodan Milošević gained prominence, Western liberals began to criticize his drive to carve out a "Greater Serbia" from parts of Yugoslavia. But for most people Yugoslavia was far away; it was Europe's problem, not ours; and anyway it was too complicated. Some leftists even believed the talk show hosts who spouted, "It's an ancient ethnic hostility; there's nothing we can do about it."

But the dissolution of Yugoslavia was terribly relevant, as people have since been forced to realize. Like the Spanish Civil War, it heralded the development of a new set of power relationships in Europe and throughout the world. Coming on the heels of the Gulf War, the Yugoslav dissolution was a second key signpost in the unfolding of post-Cold War geopolitics. (continued on next page)



## The Left Looked the Other Way

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The response of Western governments was to let the conflict fester, and then propose map-based plans for its settlement. But such plans only encouraged the warring parties to fight harder to grab territory that they then would control in any peace agreement. Eventually, after the deaths of more than two hundred thousand people, NATO intervened in 1995 and forced the belligerents to the negotiating table at Dayton.

Western critics of foreign policy did not succeed in using the occasion of intervention to sort out the origin of the conflict. If they paid attention at all, they reflexively criticized Western intervention (or in some cases agonized about the massacres), and left it at that.

It was as if those who were not paying attention during the decline of Yugoslavia in the 1980s woke up on the eve of NATO's interventions (in Bosnia in 1995 and Kosovo in 1999), consulted their book of slogans, and said, "Thou shalt not intervene." The most penetrating radical analysts of our time repeated the call, as the blood was flowing, for further negotiations with Milosevic. Noam Chomsky, Alexander Cockburn, and even Subcomandante Marcos chimed in, fitting the reality of Yugoslavia into their own paradigms, rather than staying alert for new models of analysis.

This comment is not meant as enthusiastic support for U.S. intervention, but as a criticism of the lack of deeper examination of the Yugoslav conflict. Chomsky has often written astutely of the totalitarianism governing mainstream thought in the West. Unfortunately, the blind impulse to explain all the world's ills as stemming directly and exclusively from Western imperialism has reinforced a similar intellectual strait-jacket among leftists.

Bob Myers' story of the brave work of Workers Aid (see the Spring 2002 *Fifth Estate*) helps to clarify that the real aggression in Yugoslavia was perpetrated by a fascist elite against the supporters of multicultural society. His article rightly places the biggest part of the responsibility for the wars on the regional power-mongers who used ultra-nationalism as a way to set people off against each other, and thus, to control them. In making this point, it is important to clarify, as does Myers, that there were aggressors and victims in this war. The extreme nationalist impulse that initiated the dissolution was conceived and festered in Serbia, and from there, it infected the rest of the country.

The essence of the war—and the dissolution of Yugoslavia was a series of episodes in one war—was an assault by elites against the rights of the ordinary people who had created the wealth of post-World War II Yugoslavia. This elite, a gangster/profitier criminal class composed of old communists and new nationalists, won the war. They defeated the defenders of multi-ethnic society, pillaged

and ruined the country, enriched themselves, and impoverished the majority.

This is not to deny that nationalist aggression precipitated the war. But for many of the leaders, this nationalism was in fact just an excuse to create new positions of wealth and power for themselves. Unfortunately, some of those who started out as defenders of multiculturalism ended up in the elite. In many parts of Bosnia, the warlords are still in power, fulfilling their war aims through other means, slowly privatizing the wealth that they did not create, and cementing their control over society.

### Western Policy: Complicity, or Negligence?

Bob Myers amply describes the assault of the elite against multiculturalism in Bosnia; he also portrays the recklessness of Western diplomacy in its habitual negotiations with the warlords, and Western diplomats' legitimization of the separatists' aims through recurring proposals for one or another variant of ethnic cantonization of the country. However, in refuting the conspiratorial theories of confused or ill-intentioned leftists, he ascribes more intention and foresight to Western policymakers than they actually merit. His characterization of the intention of the international community as complicity in a conspiracy to destroy Yugoslavia is not far from the position of many people in the region, especially some Serbs, who have searched for an explanation outside the realm of their own responsibility. It is not unusual in the former Yugoslavia to hear that the West worked to destroy their socialism. It is much more accurate to say that Western governments coldly observed the atrocities, and let the dissolution take its course.

**Unfortunately, the blind impulse to explain all the world's ills as stemming directly and exclusively from Western imperialism has reinforced an intellectual strait-jacket among leftists.**

The international community's response to the breakup of Yugoslavia furthered it along through the cantonization proposals, as well as through the arms embargo that only affected the greatest victims. But Myers repeatedly characterizes the international reaction as a direct collusion with nationalist aggression, which it was not. The bumbling policies of Bush I and Clinton were reactive; they fit well within the stock repertoire of super-power responses, but they did not display the kind of foresight that Myers ascribes to them.

Myers writes, "No-one wanted to help us because we were taking food to people resisting ethnic cleansing." The implication is that the United States and its allies specifically opposed multiculturalism in Bosnia, and were willing to collaborate with Milosevic (and Croatian President Tudjman) in its eradication.

The truth is something much coarser: Western governments simply did not care about the suffering of millions of Yugoslavs. They were willing to wait the war out with backs turned, as long as it did not threaten to spread across international borders. The guiding principle was "Make anguished pronouncements and take no risks." Thus, the dozens of sham cease-fires, and the elevation of negotiations with war criminals into an honorable policy.

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This was not purposeful complicity, but the carelessness of arrogant power that believes that it can allow all kinds of disasters to happen with no damage to itself. This approach is the result of the political philosophy that leaves out all human considerations, only caring for the functioning of international business.

Put differently, international diplomacy is comfortable with peace without justice or, often, war without justice, just as long as business can go on. Illustrating this principle, the West promotes "stability" in the Middle East, always and forever, without the least thought given to the dignity of millions of suffering people. It was this same imperative for a bankrupt kind of stability that eventually prompted the United States and its allies to intervene in the Balkans.

This coarse imperative does not require a conspiracy. The international system of business and war simply functions this way. If hundreds of thousands of Bosnian Muslims are under threat of extermination, it is a negligible misfortune in the higher scheme of things. But if, as happened in Kosovo, the conflict threatens finally to spill across international borders, draw two NATO members in on opposite sides, and disrupt the smooth functioning of the European Union, then there must be intervention.

An important episode in this unprincipled drive for stability in ex-Yugoslavia was the NATO intervention after the August 1995 Croat/Muslim offensive that expelled Serb nationalist forces from part of the territory they had conquered in Bosnia. In the middle of this offensive, Western diplomats pressured the allied Croat and Muslim troops to halt, as their advancing forces would have liberated the rest of the northern half of the Republika Srpska.

The West did not want this to happen for two reasons: it would have caused several hundred thousand more Serbs to become refugees; and it would have created a power imbalance between the Serbs, Muslims, and Croats in Bosnia, with the latter two dominant. This was not permissible, but the international diplomats were unable to conceive of a way to re-establish stability without partitioning the country into two equally powerful entities. Dayton did this; instead of establishing democracy, it legalized the divisions achieved in war.

Myers exalts the class-consciousness of Bosnia's defenders by describing Tuzla as a mining town where the masses organized to defend multiculturalism. But Tuzla was at once more and less than this description implies. Tuzla has a progressive tradition reaching back a hundred years before the Partisans fought the Nazis. It grew under Austro-Hungarian influence from a mining center into a cultural bridge between central Bosnia and Central Europe. Technology, education, and unionism flourished there.

At the same time, it is not accurate to depict Tuzla as a place where the socialist masses rose up as one in response to Serbian aggression. First, socialism as an ideal had been quite battered by the end of the 1980s, by which time the Yugoslav standard of living had experienced ten years of precipitous decline. (This was, after all, the context for the development of fascism.) Secondly, during the war, Tuzlans were much more concerned with surviving a day-to-day endeavor than with preserving Tito's Yugoslavia.

By the end of the war, there was precious little vestige of socialism or multi-ethnicity remaining, even in Tuzla. And as the only municipality that retained an anti-nationalist government throughout the war and beyond, Tuzla was indeed relatively progressive and relatively lucky. In Sarajevo and other Muslim-controlled areas, a nationalist infrastructure had developed that had only a declarative interest in multiculturalism. Of course, political criminality and hardships for ethnic minorities were much more extreme in the areas under Serb and Croat control.

Moving to the post-war period, Myers calls the U.N. troops the "new masters" of Bosnia. But there is much less intent and coordination on the part of the international community's representatives in Bosnia than this implies. The only program implemented effectively by the international community has been

---

**International diplomacy is comfortable  
with peace without justice or,  
often, war without justice, just  
as long as business can go on.  
This coarse imperative does not  
require a conspiracy. The international  
system of business and war  
simply functions this way.**

---

the separation of the belligerents — and for this, most Bosnians on all sides are appreciative. But the "controllers" of Bosnia have not prevented the warlords-cum-politicians from solidifying the division of Bosnia. Again, this is more through carelessness and risk-avoidance than intent. It is simply not important to Western representatives (with a few exceptions) to take the measures necessary to ensure dignity for ordinary Bosnians.

As long as they are not fighting, we can call it "stability." Due to the systemic constraints described above, this is the only policy of which the international community is capable. But it will backfire, just as it has in the Middle East.

The theory of Western collusion in the breakup of Yugoslavia is understandable. It is intuitively attractive: now Western European influence and American military presence in the Balkans are vastly greater than they were ten years ago. But these things are the fringe benefits—and sometimes liabilities—to the United States and its allies, resulting from their bumbling through one crisis after another. They can bumble and still win, because they have enough weapons to be very careless, and still remain in control.

**FE NOTE:** Peter Lippman works for the Advocacy Project ([www.advocacy.net.org](http://www.advocacy.net.org)). He did relief work and human rights research in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1997 to 1999. He has since returned to the region regularly and is currently preparing a campaign to aid non-governmental organizations working for refugee return and reconstruction in Srebrenica, Bosnia. For some of his writings on Kosovo and Bosnia, see [www.glypx.com/BalkanWitness/](http://www.glypx.com/BalkanWitness/).



We do not want others, more or less of the right, center or left, to decide for us. We want to participate directly in the decisions which concern us, to control those who govern us, without regard to their political affiliation, and oblige them to "rule by obeying." We do not struggle to take power, we struggle for democracy, liberty, and justice. Our political proposal is the most radical in Mexico (perhaps in the world, but it is still too soon to say). It is so radical that all the traditional political spectrum (right, center left and those of one or the other extreme) criticize us and walk away from our delirium.

It is not our arms which make us radical; it is the new political practice which we propose and in which we are immersed with thousands of men and women in Mexico and the world: the construction of a political practice which does not seek the taking of power but the organization of society. Intellectuals and political leadership, of all sizes, of the ultraright, of the right, the center, of the left and the ultraleft, national and international criticize our proposal. We are so radical that we do not fit in the parameters of "modern political science." We are not bragging ... we are pointing out the facts. Is there anything more radical than to propose to change the world? You know this because you share this dream with us, and because, though the truth be repeated, we dream it together.

—Subcomandante Marcos, 1995

# Marcos: The Zapatistas' Unknown Icon

by David E. Finlay

Subcomandante Marcos, masked man, is the faceless face of Mexico's Zapatista National Liberation Army. In 1994, the summer after the Zapatista rebellion, caravans to Chiapas, in Mexico, were all the rage in North American left-wing activist circles: friends got together, raised money for second-hand vans, filled them up with supplies, then drove south to San Cristobal de la Casas and left the vans behind. Back then, Zapatista-mania looked suspiciously like just another cause for guilt-ridden "Lefties" with a Latin American fetish: just another "Marxist" rebel army with another macho leader—another chance to go South and buy some cheap colorful textiles.

Hadn't we heard this story before; hadn't it ended badly?

A few days ago, there was another caravan in Chiapas; but this one was different. For one thing, it didn't end in San Cristobal de las Casas—it started there and has since crisscrossed the Mexican countryside before the planned grand entrance into Mexico City on March 11. This caravan is led by the council of 24 Zapatista commanders wearing full uniforms and black facemasks (but no weapons), including Subcomandante Marcos himself. Because it

is unheard of for the Zapatista command to travel outside Chiapas—there are vigilantes threatening deadly duels with Marcos all along the way—the "Zapatour," as the Mexican press calls it, needs tight security. Since the Red Cross refused to do the job, protection is provided by several hundred anarchists from Italy, who call themselves "Ya Basta!" ("Enough is enough!") after the defiant phrase used in the Zapatistas' declaration of war. Hundreds of students, small farmers, and activists have joined this "roadshow": thousands greet them on the way. Unlike the previous visitors to Chiapas, these travelers say they are there, not because they are "in solidarity" with the Zapatistas, but because they are Zapatistas. Some even claim to be Subcomandante Marcos himself, saying, "we are all Marcos."

These are people who have learned to steer clear of charismatic leaders with one-size-fits-all ideologies. They aren't party loyalists; they are members of groups who pride themselves on their complete autonomy and absence of hierarchy. Marcos is an anti-leader just right for this highly critical and suspicious band of rebels. Not only does he refuse to show his face, undercutting —

(continued on next page)



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and simultaneously enhancing—his own celebrity, but his story is that of someone who came to prominence, not through any swaggering, self-importance, or certainty, but by coming to terms with political uncertainty, by learning to listen and follow.

Although there is no confirmation of Marcos' real identity, the most common legend surrounding him says that beginning as an urban, "Marxist" intellectual and activist, he was wanted by the state and was no longer safe in the cities. He then fled to the mountains of Chiapas in southeast Mexico—filled with revolutionary rhetoric and certainty—to convert the impoverished indigenous masses to the cause of armed proletarian revolution against the Mexican bourgeoisie. He told the Mayan Indians that the world's workers must unite—but they just stared. They said they weren't workers and besides, land wasn't property but the heart of their community.

Having failed as a "Marxist missionary" (he was never a real Marxist at all, needless to say), Marcos immersed himself in Mayan culture. But the more he learned, the less he knew. Out of this process, a new, unique sort of army emerged: the EZLN, the Zapatista National Liberation Army, which wasn't controlled by an elite of guerilla commanders but by the communities themselves, through both clandestine councils and open committees. Marcos wasn't a commander barking orders but a conduit for the will of the councils. Today, he says that a Zapatista is "anyone anywhere who is fighting injustice," that "we are you." He once stated:

"Marcos is a gay in San Francisco, a black in South Africa, an Asian in Europe, a Chicano in San Ysidro, an anarchist in Spain, a Palestinian in Israel, a Mayan Indian in the streets of San Cristobal, a Jew in Germany, a gypsy in Poland, a Mohawk in Quebec, a pacifist in Bosnia, a single woman on the Metro at 10 PM, a peasant without land, a gang member in the slums, an unemployed worker, an unhappy student..."

Juana Ponce de Leon, the collector and editor of Marcos' writings in *Our Word is Our Weapon* (published by Serpent's Tail in hardcover), wrote that

"This non-self makes it possible for Marcos to become the spokesperson for indigenous communities. He is transparent, and he is iconographic."

Yet, the paradox of Marcos and the Zapatistas is that despite their masks, mystery, and anonymity, their whole struggle is about the opposite of anonymity—the right to be seen and heard. In a statement, the EZLN declared: "Below in the cities, we did not exist. Our lives were worth less than those of machines or animals. We were like stones, like weeds in the road. We were silenced. We were faceless."

(continued on next page)



illustration by Latuff from the Zapatista Art Gallery (available widely on the Internet)



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The Zapatistas are "the voice that arms itself to be heard; the face that hides itself to be seen." In *Our Word is Our Weapon*, we read manifestos and war cries that are also poems and legends. A character emerges from the black mask: a real person.

It is rumored that when in a few days' time the 24-strong Zapatista command arrive in Mexico City, they intend to ride downtown on horseback; there will be a massive rally and concerts, and they will ask to address the Congress. There, they will demand the legislators pass an Indigenous Bill of Rights.

What is clear now is that there has been a radical change in the balance of power in Mexico. The Zapatistas are calling the shots now (although they have lost the habit of firing shots). What began as a small, armed insurrection has, in the last seven years, grown into a more peaceful mass movement. It helped to topple the 71-year reign of the so-called Institutional Revolutionary Party, and has placed indigenous rights at the center of Mexico's political agenda.

Marcos gets angry when anyone regards him as just another guy with a gun. He asks, "What other guerrilla force has convened a national democratic movement, civic and peaceful, so that armed struggle becomes useless? What other guerrilla force asks its base of support what it should do before doing it? What other guerrilla force has struggled to achieve a democratic space and not take power? What other guerrilla force has relied more on words than on bullets?"

When the rebels called themselves Zapatistas, they took the name from Emiliano Zapata, the slain hero of the 1910 Mexican Revolution, who, with a rag-tag peasant army, fought for land held by large capitalist landowners to be returned to indigenous and peasant farmers. Today, the Zapatistas are more than only a rebellion against grinding poverty and humiliation; they have become theorists of a new movement—another way of thinking about power, resistance, and globalization. This theory, called "Zapatismo," turns not only classic guerilla tactics inside out, but a lot of Left-wing ideology on its head (an achievement long overdue!).

Marcos spreads the Zapatista word through riddles: revolutionaries who do not want power; people who must hide their faces to be seen; a world with many worlds within it. In places like Canada and the United States, indigenous uprising as always been symbolized by the blockade—a physical barrier to stop a golf course from being built on a native burial ground, or to block construction of a hydroelectric dam, or to keep an old growth forest from being logged. This Zapatista uprising, in contrast, is a new way to protect land and culture: rather than locking out the world, the Zapatistas have flung open the doors and invited the world inside. Despite its poverty and despite being under continual military

siege, Chiapas has been transformed into a global gathering place for radical activists, intellectuals and indigenous groups.

Marcos is a one-man web: a compulsive communicator, constantly reaching out, drawing connections between many different issues and struggles. He writes to political prisoners such as Mumia Abu Jamal and Leonard Peltier. He addresses letters to "The People of the World."

When the uprising began, the Mexican government tried to play down the incident as a "local problem"—an ethnic dispute easily contained. But the Zapatistas' strategic victory changed the terms, insisting that what was going on in Chiapas couldn't be written off as merely a narrow "ethnic" struggle and that it was in reality universal. They did so by clearly naming their enemy not only as the Mexican State but as the set of economic policies known as neoliberalism. Marcos insisted that the poverty and desperation in Chiapas was actually a more advanced example of something happening all over the planet. He referred to the enormous numbers of people who were left behind by prosperity, whose land and labor made that prosperity possible. "The new distribution of the world excludes 'minorities,'" says Marcos: "the indigenous, youth, women, homosexuals, lesbians, people of colour, immigrants, workers, peasants: the majority who make up the world basements are presented ... as disposable. The distribution of the world excludes majorities..."

## Marcos spreads the Zapatista word through riddles: revolutionaries who do not want power; people who must hide their faces to be seen; a world with many worlds within it.

According to conservative estimates, there are now about 45,000 Zapatista-related web sites on the Internet, based in 26 countries. Marcos' communiqués are available in at least 14 different languages. Many who attended the first *encuentros* ("big meetings") went on to play key

roles in the mass protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle and against the IMF and World Bank in Washington DC. They came up with a taste for collective decision-making and decentralized organization. When the insurrection began, the Mexican military were convinced they would be able to squash the Zapatistas' jungle uprising "like a bug." They sent in heavy artillery, carried out air raids, and mobilized thousands of troops. Instead of standing on a squashed bug, the state found itself surrounded by a great swarm of international activists, buzzing around Chiapas.

In a study commissioned by the US military from the Rand Corporation, the EZLN was seen as "a new mode of conflict—'netwar'—in which the protagonists depend on using network forms of organization, doctrine, strategy, and technology." This is "dangerous," according to Rand, because what begins as a "war of the flea" quickly becomes "a war of the swarm."

Quite so, quite so! Viva Zapata!

—Brighton, Sussex, England, March 2001

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### Drawing Resistance

Back in November, I had the privilege to see the Drawing Resistance traveling exhibition at Detroit's Trumbullplex. This compelling collection addresses the anti-globalization movement, working class rights, the destruction of the environment, corporate control, police brutality, homelessness, gentrification, and the Zapatista liberation movement in Mexico.

The organizers describe the project as inspired by the Do-It-Yourself ethics of the punk rock community as opposed to the corporate culture of big art shows. Additionally, as the exhibition moves from city to city, local groups "are planning collaborative events to coincide with the show. Events discussed in various cities include a local political art show, documentary film nights, skill share events, artist talks, and street art performances."

The show began touring in late 2001 and hopes to stay on the road until sometime

in 2004. Later this year, appearances are scheduled in: Providence, Rhode Island; Plainfield, Vermont; Montreal, Quebec; Toronto, Ontario; and Toledo, Ohio. Check the website ([drawingresistance.org](http://drawingresistance.org)) for updated schedules and details.

### Anarchist Communitarians

When I began researching my book project *Utopian Prospects, Communal Projects* back in 1997, I was struck by how few contemporary writers and activists made explicit connections between revolutionary anarchism and utopian communalism. Thus, I'm encouraged by the emergence last year of the Anarchist Communitarian Network (ACN), founded by a handful of anarchists who are also involved in intentional communities.

Anomie, a member of ACN, comments, "Community is anarchy in action. Non-hierarchical organizational structures, consensus-based decision-making, and a non-capitalist lifestyle are all commonalities shared by strains of anarchism and communitarians."

Currently, most of the ACN's work has involved networking and education although some folks want to formalize a federation of anarchist communities. They have an excellent website ([www.anarchistcommunitarian.net](http://www.anarchistcommunitarian.net)) and

newsletter called *The Communitarian Anarchist*. To order the newsletter, contact Marc Silverstein at [silverstein\\_marc@hotmail.com](mailto:silverstein_marc@hotmail.com). Write the ACN at P.O. Box 7180, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33338-7180.

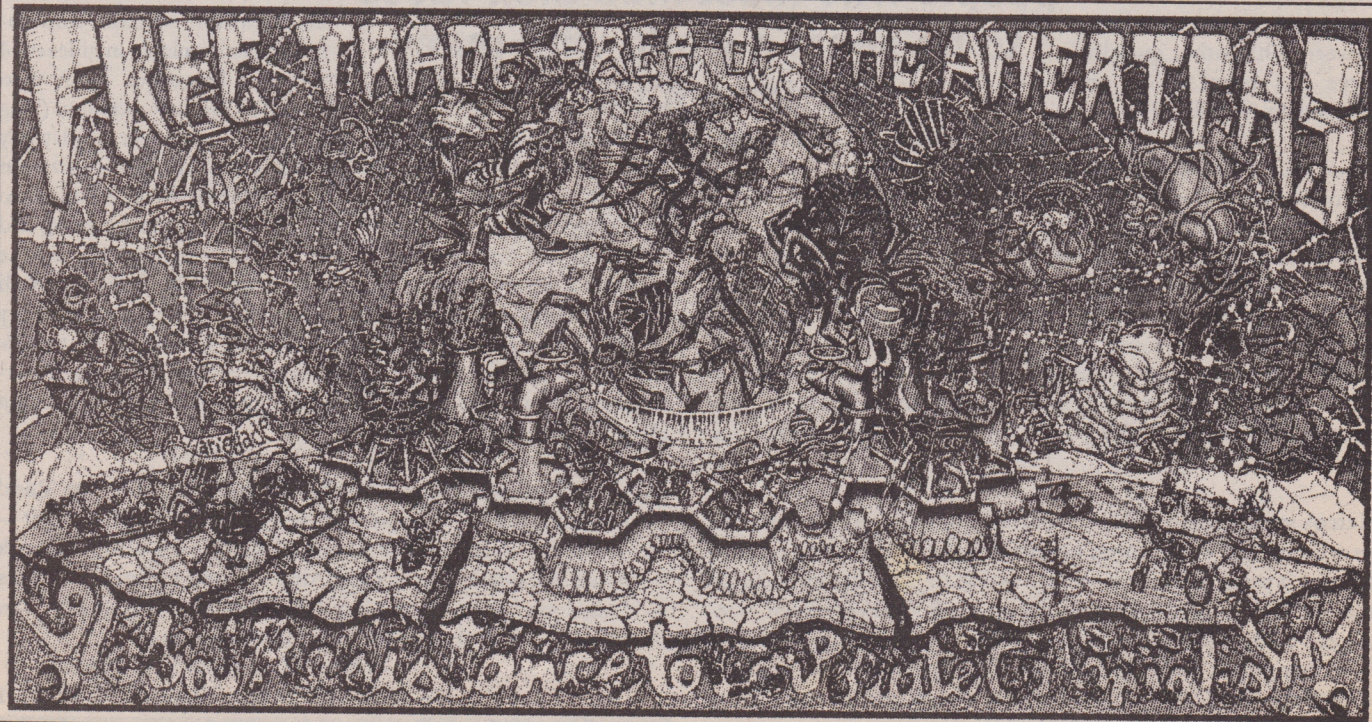
### Anarchist Black Cross

The prison system is the armed fist of the State and is a system for State slavery. . . . Thus it must be opposed at every turn and ultimately destroyed altogether. —Lorenzo Komboa Ervin

The first Anarchist Black Cross conference in North America since 1994 will be held July 26-28, 2002, in Austin, Texas. Some goals of this meeting include: to build our solidarity and communications among the various autonomous prisoner support tendencies; to learn together and from one another via our experiences; to educate on the ins and out of prisoner support, freedom campaigns, etc.; to get autonomous anarchist anti-prison groups acquainted and developing an ABC network; and to help people interested in prisoner support work to organize effective ABC groups in their communities.

Contact: Austin ABC, P.O. Box 19733, Austin, TX 78760-9733 or email: [austinabc\\_@hotmail.com](mailto:austinabc_@hotmail.com).

(continued on next page)



This poster (40"x 60" full size) by Kehben Grifter and Juan Manchu at the Beehive Design Collective appears in the traveling show "Drawing Resistance." The Beehive's mission is to provide agitative, inspirational, informative, anticopyright imagery for grassroots organizing. Contact them at 3 Elm St., Machias, Maine 04054 or visit ([beehivecollective.org](http://beehivecollective.org)).



## Words of love, words of war

*Days of War, Nights of Love: Crimethink for Beginners.* \$8 ppd.

*Harbinger* (of a new dawn) donation.

Available from Crimethinc Workers Collective  
(2695 Rangewood Dr. Atlanta, GA 30345 or PO Box 1963 Olympia, WA 98507 or visit them in "cyberia" at [crimethinc.com](http://crimethinc.com))



**Days of War  
Nights of Love**  
the first Crimethinc book

We make suggestions, we spread this propaganda of desire, because we hope by doing so to indulge our own programmed passion for propaganda in a way that undermines an order that discourages all of us from playing with our passions--and so to enter a world of total liberty and diversity, where propaganda and power struggles alike are obsolete. See you on the other side.

—Crimethinc Workers Collective

Just when the politics of desire appeared permanently appropriated by academics and advertisers, some new voices burst into the anti-authoritarian scene with as much subtlety as a supermarket tabloid, as much intelligence as a wisened sage, and as much restraint as an orgasmic moan.

Few writings from the so-called anarchist milieu in recent years have inspired and energized as much as the generous eruptions of provocative prose from the Crimethinc Collective. From the sporadic and emphatic zine *Harbinger* to the deliciously arrogant anthology *Days of War, Nights of Love*, these linguistic pranksters pose revolutionary ideals with a sense of poetry, immediacy, and joy that's all too rare in these dark days. Many readers will instantly be reminded of the urgency and playfulness found in so many Situationist slogans circa May '68.

Apparently, some critics categorize the Crimethinc project as nothing more than a bunch of unsophisticated, identity-seeking, counter-culture bohemians, thus

## Abandon Automobile

poems like distilled scenes from the grey of a city whose lettuce days are just stories of  
a drunk at a vet's bar

poems whose hope defies common sense

poems like old friends loves memories that haunt with each page turned

poems that pull threads out of the collective conscience of a place

this is *Abandon Automobile Detroit City Poetry 2001*

*Abandon Automobile* edited by melba joyce boyd and m l liebler is  
comprehensive in covering detroit poetry over the last four decades

the poems

tell the story of what the city is to the authors

how it changes them in

their lives

or just plain says here have a slice of pie

it tastes just like your grandmother's

and it doesn't matter anymore

the incinerator

the assembly plants deserted

the murders

the vernors plant

the alive blackbottom

the regentrified

the never will be gentrified

streets that don't see snow plows

for better or worse detroit infects its writers

like a siren in this old port town

like andrei codrescu writes (p.99)

"& it's true

in a way i was born here

born an american here

an american without a car

in motor city

born in detroit oddly enough

but never regretfully"

—Jason Kohser

**Abandon Automobile: Detroit City Poetry 2001. Eds. Melba Joyce Boyd and M.L. Liebler. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2001.**

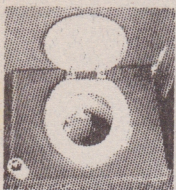
Diverse, dynamic, and defiant—this ambitious anthology of poetry as resistance includes the words of many past and current friends of and contributors to the *Fifth Estate*, including: William Boyer, Andrei Codrescu, Maurice Greenia, Jim Gustafson, Kevin Rashid, Marilynn Rashid, John Sinclair, David Watson, and others.

sounding as old and cranky as Murray Bookchin on a bad day. Of course, as anarchists, we must question everyone and everything, but by taking this skeptical stance, we need not deny the presence of insurrectionary art in our lives that has the capacity to move beyond suspicion and inscribe hope. It's as though some writers, thinkers, and activists, completely devoid of poetry and delight in their own lives, must automatically dismiss any comrades

who exude the poetry of refusal.

For me, resistance to the state, capital, and all specific organs of conformity and control demands that I maintain the integrity of an imagined and lived autonomous alternative. The Crimethinc propaganda provides part of this vision. Their words of love and war stoke the fires we must keep burning if we ever hope to leave the prison of this society.





# Think Brown: the politics of poop & the planet

Joe Jenkins. *The Humanure Handbook*.

Jenkins Publishing: PO Box 607, Grove City, PA 16127 (jenkinspublishing.com). To order, call the distributor (1 800 639 4099).

First published in the mid-1990s, Joe Jenkins' *Humanure Handbook*—now in a second printing and a revised, expanded version—is already a classic among the down-to-earth, back-to-the-land crowd. The book's premise is simple: composting crap can create a better world; in other words, recycling human excrement is part of a larger spiritual, scientific, and social program to

redeem the biosphere and curb humanity's role as an ecological parasite and cultural pathogen. Without changing our waste management policies and philosophies, Jenkins knows we are on the path to pooping up the planet with pollutants until the former paradise is soiled beyond repair.

Picking up where many hippy-type composters left off in the 1970s, Jenkins wants the shit to hit the fan concerning our attitudes towards the stuff that comes out of our collective assholes. While dozens of new-age, self-help, and green-living manuals are cranked out each year to peddle paradigm shifts and lifestyle tweaking, Jenkins' manure manifesto distinguishes itself from so much touchy-feely gobbledygook due to the precise manner in which he makes his arguments. He combines humor and humility, extensive empirical research and compelling unpretentious rhetoric to dispel myths about—and create an appreciation for—

our doo-doo. That is, while many books of the eco-living genre read as though their writers are full of shit, Jenkins clearly has his shit together.



**The old toilet can now be used for decorative gardening.**

getting closer to nature and recycling our own is an infinitely safer and more sanitary solution to catastrophic waste management problems.

Not only does re-using our poop keep us from further contaminating public lakes, rivers, and streams, it creates one of the best and cheapest fertilizers available for the home garden. The circle is elegant and unbroken: grow food, eat food, eliminate excrement, re-use seasoned compost as fertilizer to grow food, and so on. While Jenkins anticipates every counterargument and provides exhaustive evidenc, the methods he describes to create a simple sawdust toilet and compost pile are actually quite simple..

Jenkins has a name for the mental disease best paraphrased as dread of one's own dung: fecophobia. So severe is this aversion to our natural expulsions, over the last century we've created a complex web of wasteful practices to deal with them. These practices, in short, are fouling up our most precious, life-sustaining resource:

water. Despite powerful myths to the contrary,

Since moving to Tennessee in 1996, I've helped oversee my rural collective's poop recycling situation. Our whole system cost under \$50 and has provided us each spring with a pile of nutrient-rich, dark, lush loam to use on the garden. When I see folks spend dollars on plastic bags full of potting soil to plant the spring flowers, I want to shake them out of their stupor: "You can make this yourself! Recycle your shit!"

Jenkins has created a highly-readable, deservedly-popular, self-published book that offers hope that humans will no longer harbor irrational fears about feces and move on to dealing with the real shit: creating a livable world where our species ceases to destroy its habitat.—Sunfrog



The simple sawdust toilet collects the crap in a five gallon bucket. The shit cooks for a year with other organic materials in a compost bin. The heat of decomposition kills all the yuckies and nasties. The well-done compost is a lush loam for the garden.



# mayday poem 2002

**Each spring,**  
several hundred souls commune  
on pasture and pavement  
to protect planet and people.  
To be cleansed requires passage into  
the depths of dirt,  
the manna of mud,  
the sorcery of sweat.  
We accept the bounty and beauty  
of the unbound peasants' bacchanalia.

We dance the dialectic, resolve  
revolutionary contradiction,  
dissolve commodity fiction.  
Opposing high-tech  
Armageddon, we pull our  
parade of possibility  
out of secret places and  
trump their ridiculous  
assumptions with  
an autonomous carnival  
of desire.

words & photo  
bi Polly Morfis

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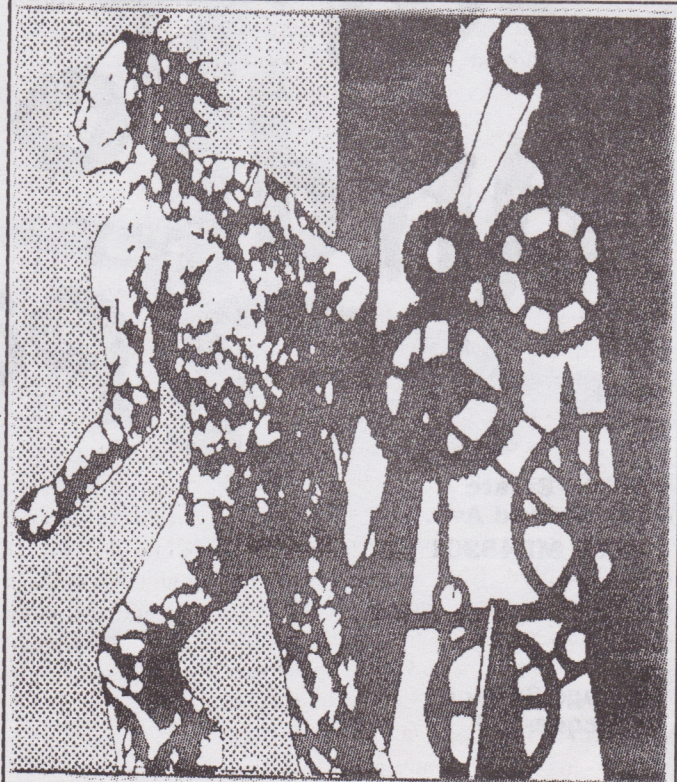
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**war  
is  
very  
profitable**

**for politicians  
and other  
parasites**

—Albo Jeavons

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